

DEVELOPMENT CENTRE STUDIES

PRESENTED BY
Dr. M.N. PANINI

BASIC NEEDS VIEWED FROM ABOVE AND FROM BELOW

THE CASE OF KARNATAKA STATE, INDIA

by

T.S Epstein et M.N. Panini

M.N. Srinivas et V.S. Parthasarathy



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*Basic Needs, General Aspects
and National Contexts*

*Project edited and coordinated by
Denyse Harari*

DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
OF THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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DANS L'ÉTAT DU KARNATAKA, INDE

Le point de vue des dirigeants
et celui des groupes concernés



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The present study explores two aspects of basic needs strategies in the context of the South Indian State of Karnataka. Part I, "A View from Above", discusses the scene at the macro-level and examines how a few political decisions have been translated into action. Part II, "A View from Below", investigates how the poor themselves struggle to survive.

Karnataka State was chosen for study because of the research team's close acquaintance over many years not only with local policy-makers but also with the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the rural areas. M.N. Panini and T.S. Epstein concentrated on producing Part I while M.N. Srinivas and V.S. Parthasarathy compiled Part II. All four authors joined in writing the concluding chapter.

Parts I and II complement each other and cast light on the way development is perceived at the two poles of society. In both cases the focus is on people and the method of investigation is mainly anthropological.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study⁽¹⁾ is the fifth one of the project on Basic Needs: General Aspects and National Contexts, carried out at the Development Centre of the OECD and co-ordinated and edited by Denyse Harari.

The project was started in November 1976, shortly after the World Employment Conference's call to include as priority objectives of development the promotion of employment and the satisfaction of the basic needs of each country's population.

Most of the research resources devoted by international organisations to the new strategy were concentrated on economic and technical studies. A whole area remained for the Centre to explore: the social and political dimensions of basic-needs policies.

At a first meeting of international experts, it was decided to launch a series of case studies on the relationship between national and international political and social aspects of under-development and the satisfaction of basic needs at the level of the village, the neighbourhood and the household.

The Centre did not determine a priori the research topics nor offer pre-conceived guidelines. Instead, it arranged a succession of meetings in which the researchers who were to undertake the national case studies could each contribute his or her considerable experience in a particular local context and discuss both substantial issues and problems of research design with a rotating group of international experts, so that an autonomous consensus could be achieved on common research design hypotheses and on the broad lines of a shared methodology. This provided a sound basis for comparison, in spite of the specificity of the different case studies.

1. Jointly sponsored and financed by the Development Centre of the OECD and the Ministry of Overseas Development of the United Kingdom.

All of them focus on the socio-economic, political and cultural relationships of specific deprived groups with the rest of the society, in the context of their national and local social history. The groups are defined in terms of their position in the process of production - and not on the basis of cutting points in a statistical distribution - and an effort is made to portray concretely their power relationships, as they combat the difficulties of their social and political environment and try to survive and to shape a place for themselves.

Each study tries to capture the interrelationships between deprivation at the village and household level, on the one hand, and national and international long-range processes, on the other, by using not only economic statistics and social and political history but interviews, life histories, informal local history and other anthropological data. The opinions expressed are those of the researchers involved in the project, and not necessarily those of the OECD or its Member governments.

Besides the present study, the following publications have resulted from the project:

Struggle for Basic Needs in Nepal(2) is concerned with the most deprived and poor people in one of the poorest countries of the world. The study shows how their poverty has been aggravated as a result of population growth and stagnant production. It describes their unavailing attempts to withdraw from a pattern of social and economic relations which perpetuates this poverty, given prevailing technical conditions and property relations, and their individual survival strategies which involve additional use of already overstretched land and forest resources and further endanger the national economy.

Basic Needs in the Context of Social Change: The Case of Peru(3) underlines the changing structural determinants of the life conditions of two groups of agricultural workers selected to illustrate the differentiation of the poor in Peru and their changing individual and

2. P.M. Blaikie, J. Cameron and J.D. Seddon, OECD Development Centre, 1979. This study was jointly sponsored and financed by the Development Centre of the OECD and the Directorate for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Swiss Confederation.

3. Giorgio Alberti, OECD Development Centre, 1981. This study was jointly sponsored by the Development Centre of the OECD and the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, of Lima, Peru.

collective strategies for basic-needs satisfaction. The study shows that the life conditions of the selected groups are largely dependent on their relationships with outside groups and institutions and that these relationships change as a result of the convergence between structural transformation and local efforts.

A Basic-Needs Analytical Bibliography(4) includes nearly 2,000 references to studies in the general area of basic needs and development, divided into three parts: "Basic needs as a synthetic development approach: its relationship to previous orientations", "Core bibliography" and "Specific sub-areas". The critical comments by the editor closely follow the structure of the bibliography and attempt to appraise the probable future of basic-needs studies and strategies.

Social Conflict and Development(5), a study intended as a synthesis of the four national studies, each of which it has followed closely in its search for a first comparative framework of the contextual aspects of extreme deprivation at national and international level.

The final study is completed: "Tarahil" and Landless Labourers in Rural Egypt(6), considers the end-result of policies adopted by the Egyptian Government after 1958 on behalf of the lowest income-groups of that country, including land reform, subsidies, price-fixing, etc. The groups chosen to pinpoint the effects of those policies are the "tarahil" temporary labour gangs formed by landless and almost landless peasants, recruited seasonally by labour contractors, and working as a group away from their villages of origin.

The Development Centre would like to thank the many institutions and scholars who helped in the preparation of the present project, and, in particular, the Aspen Institute, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, the Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale-Entwicklung, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, the International Labour Organisation, the Research Policy Institute of the University of Lund, UNESCO and UNRISD, Mrs. Nancy Baxter, Dr. Elisabeth Jelin

4. Jorge Garcia-Bouza, OECD Development Centre, 1980.

5. Denyse Harari and Jorge Garcia-Bouza, OECD Development Centre, 1982.

6. This study, jointly sponsored by the Development Centre of the OECD and the United States Aid Mission to Egypt, located in Cairo, was financed by the latter.

and Messrs. M. Bloch-Lemoine, F.H. Cardoso, R. Cassen, R. Dore, C. Elliot, C. Furtado, K. Griffen, M. Hopkins, F. Kahnert, F. Paukert, S. Radwan, G.K. Thompson and J. Viet.

The authors of Part II of the present study would like to thank Mr. N. Sanatkumar and Mr. R.N. Hadimani for help in the canvassing of the schedules and the collection of other data; Dr. S. Seshaiah for his participation in the discussions at various stages of the project; above all, the inhabitants of Chakrabhavi village for their co-operation and friendship.

The Development Centre feels the need to reiterate here, briefly, the overall rationale of this type of basic-needs approach to the problems of developing countries. Although the possibility of eradicating absolute poverty from vast sectors of humanity is an ideal of the utmost importance and urgency, the reasons for interest in widespread basic-needs deficits in developing countries are not exclusively charitable(7). This is why these studies are not concentrated on poverty per se, but on poor working groups in developing countries. The fate of those groups is intimately linked, both as a symptom and as a crucial secondary cause, to a certain pattern of underdevelopment which presents particularly intractable difficulties and critically important challenges to their whole society and, more especially, to the scholar who tries to understand its situation and to the planners and politicians who try to change it.

In fact, societies which can only function on the basis of the extreme poverty and the unlimited exploitation of under-privileged working groups are examples of a particularly "warped" type of underdevelopment, either stagnant or regressive. These societies cannot escape the multiple vicious circles which thwart any attempt at necessary changes, without a sustained effort on the part of the victims of this situation themselves, aided by a number of social and political groups and actors both within the country and outside it.

7. On the other hand, there is a strong humanitarian motivation in this type of study. Extreme poverty is not a subject where a researcher can with good conscience rejoice in the discovery of abstract relationships without going on as soon as possible to their possible applications.

Part I

A VIEW FROM ABOVE

Chapter 1

PLANNING FOR BASIC NEEDS

"The concept of basic needs has provided the foundation stone for all of India's exercises in plan making and plan implementation."

Asok Rudra

Why Study Policy-Makers?

The State performs innumerable functions. It provides law and order, decides on war or peace, collects taxes, plans or guides national economic processes, arranges welfare programmes for the disadvantaged sections of the community, etc. The powerful punitive sanctions at the disposal of governments help to explain why so many individuals feel completely at the mercy of State actions. Groups of vested interest coalesce to manipulate State decisions to further sectional ends. For some, the State appears as patron, for others as arch-enemy. The great majority tend to treat it as a homogeneous entity.

Political scientists have analysed the relationship between elected representatives and appointed bureaucrats as well as other aspects of political systems. Some see the State as an instrument of the ruling classes while others see it as representing the democratically expressed will of the majority. The present report is in the line of those studies which attempt to identify the social and personal factors which motivate policy-makers when advocating different sets of development priorities, particularly in less developed countries.

Until recently most development plans in LDCs dealt mainly with macro-economic considerations. Their object was limited to maximising the GNP rate of growth. A shift of focus to redistribution of income and to social justice requires a considerable broadening of policy objectives. How can politicians and bureaucrats, who are used to seeing public order and economic progress as the major State priorities, be made to give a central place in their programmes to basic needs? What elements

influence policy-makers' perceptions of problems and determine their decisions? The fact that most policies represent compromises between different, often conflicting, objectives, lends an added importance to these questions.

To the extent that "man's consciousness is determined by his social being"(1), knowledge of the social background of individual policy-makers will help us find out what determines their conception of development strategies. This, in turn, constitutes a valid introduction to a better understanding of the planning process and to a more effective implementation of social justice.

Basic Needs in the Indian Setting

Development and socialism are the two main objectives of State policy in independent India(2). To pursue them, it was necessary to expand the social and economic roles of the State. To promote development with social justice, the various five year plans formulated by the Planning Commission from March 1950 onwards initiated several development programmes.

Central planning inevitably means that the State accepts responsibility for the nation's overall economic and social welfare. In India this involved the State not only in providing developmental services (such as rural extension, credit, welfare facilities, medical care, etc.) but also in controlling and sometimes even owning strategic industries.

To this purpose, the State has expanded enormously its roles and its power. Today, the citizens are subject

1. "It is from Marx that the sociology of knowledge derived its root proposition - that man's consciousness is determined by his social being", Berger, Peter L. and Luckman, Thomas, 1972, The Social Construction of Reality: A treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Penguin University Books, England, p. 17.

2. Socialism was incorporated in the Indian Constitution only recently. But as early as 1956, government policy was aimed at attaining a "socialist pattern of society", referring to an order in which "the basic criterion for determining the line of advance must not be private profit but social gain, and ... the pattern of development ... should result not only in appreciable increase in national income and employment but also in greater equality in incomes and wealth". Second Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, 1956, p.21.

to so many controls that is is no exaggeration to say that the State plays a key role in determining their lives.

Yet the State is regarded by many as too weak to attain the objectives of developmental socialism. This failure is traced to its inability to implement structural changes which might adversely affect the dominant classes in society. It is argued that the State, being an instrument of the dominant classes, cannot enact any radical changes in the society. Rudra, for instance, affirms that "the State is incapable of doing anything that would in the slightest affect adversely the interests of certain classes. One such class is that of the big capitalist houses which represent an extremely high degree of industrial concentration... A second such class is the rural rich, primarily consisting of big landowners who perhaps constitute no more than 5 per cent of the rural population." He goes on to maintain that the State is "run by a bureaucracy that is elitist, whose interests are alienated from those of the masses but do not conflict with those of the rural rich"(3).

While there may be considerable merit in this type of argument, it should not lead us to believe that the dominant classes in a society, as well as the bureaucracy, act as monolithic wholes.

In order to avoid such an oversimplification, we must examine how those who make up the State perceive the political and economic environment. Such analysis shows how policy-makers adapt to circumstances they may not wholly grasp, let alone control, and how decisions and policies emerge as a response to various environments and result from the interaction between conflicting interests.

The Karnataka Scene

The State of Karnataka was formed in 1956 during the reorganisation of the States in India which followed Independence. It includes the former princely State of Mysore and several Kannada-speaking regions of Maharashtra, Hyderabad, the former Madras Presidency and the State of Coorg. It is located in South India, on the Deccan plateau, hemmed in by the States of Goa and Maharashtra in the North and Northwest, Andhra Pradesh in the East, Tamil Nadu in the Southeast and Kerala in the Southwest. It skirts the Arabian Sea in the West. It is divided into 19 administrative districts which are further sub-divided into 175 sub-districts (taluks).

3. See Ashok Rudra, The Basic Needs Concept and its Implementation in Indian Development Plans, Bangkok, International Labour Office, 1978, p. 63.

Karnataka has a long tradition of association with the Indian National Congress, the party which led the country's freedom struggle and which has had two major splits in the last two decades. The 1977 general elections, following the period of internal emergency declared since June 1975, saw a big defeat for Mrs. Indira Gandhi's party in the North of India. She lost her seat in the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha). But in Karnataka State her faction of the Congress Party - popularly called Congress (I) - was strong enough to retain seventeen of the twenty-two seats at the Lok Sabha. In the following State Assembly elections the Congress (I) Party also maintained its hold and Mr. Devaraj Urs, its leader in the State, returned as Chief Minister(4).

Subsequently, a series of differences between Mrs. Gandhi, the President of the Congress (I) Party and Mr. Urs led to a split in the Karnataka Party. A substantial section of its representatives in the State's Legislative Assembly followed Mr. Urs and left the Congress (I) to form the Karnataka Congress, aligned at the national level with the Congress Party led by Mr. Swaran Singh(5).

The policies pursued by the Urs government in Karnataka - on which our study centres - go back to nearly two decades of planning experience in the context of national and state political development.

The continued hold of Mr. Urs over the apparatus of the State government is often attributed by his followers to the fact that he seriously undertook to put into effect the Congress (I) pledge to "remove poverty", and that measures to that end have been incorporated into state planning to further the twin goals of economic growth and distributive justice. The success of his government in achieving these aims would explain why the poorer sections of the population, consisting of the minority castes and religious groups, have staunchly supported Mr. Urs who has succeeded in overthrowing the dominant Okkaliya and Lingayat castes from positions of power(6).

4. He first became Chief Minister in 1972 and has remained in this post ever since, except for a brief interlude during 1977, when the President's rule was imposed on the State.

5. This party broke away from Congress (I) after the 1977 General elections.

6. Mr. Urs, like former rulers of Mysore, belongs to the Arasu caste. It is significant that the Janata Party, which is the main opposition in the State Assembly, is regarded as an upper caste and urban based Party. Recently, in an interview for a Calcutta-based

Continued on following page

The Political Importance of Caste

No account of politics in India is complete without reference to the caste system. For those readers who are unfamiliar with Indian castes, a brief explanation follows based on M.N. Srinivas (1962), Caste in Modern India and other Essays(7).

Caste denotes a hereditary, endogamous, usually localised group, which has a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of similar groups. The British policy of giving a certain amount of power to local self-governing bodies and preferences and concessions to backward castes encouraged caste alliances to form bigger entities. Later, the power and activity of caste increased in proportion as political power passed increasingly from the rulers to the people, and politicians and political parties strove to attract support on the basis of caste identity.

India's Constitution has not only outlawed caste in general and Untouchability in particular, but also granted statutory protection to the ex-Untouchables (now referred to as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes). The privileges awarded to these groups encouraged other underprivileged castes to apply for special treatment. This resulted in the "Backward Classes Movement". It is understandable that groups which are classed as backward are reluctant to give up privileges of "backwardness". By using caste as a criterion for backwardness, its importance is being continuously reinforced. Even economically dominant castes jockey for position on the list of Backward Classes.

In Karnataka, a few castes predominate both numerically and/or in terms of economic status. Prior to the formation of the larger state of Karnataka, the Okkaliga caste was the majority. Okkaligas are by tradition cultivators and landowners, and therefore have always lived in villages. Until not so long ago, Okkaligas in each small local region formed separate endogamous groups. Only in the last three or four decades these many

Continued from previous page.....

weekly magazine, Mr. Urs, while elaborating on the way he handled the problem of the backward classes, stated: "The legislature, in its composition, should faithfully reflect society from top to bottom. No particular caste should be allowed to dominate. Nor should the landlords or the professionals dominate. This applies to religion also. Only then can the programme and the enabling legislation (on backward classes) be put through. The same holds good for the administration."

7. 1962, Bombay, Asia Publishing House.

distinct groups have fused into one large Okkaliga caste. Such fusion is frequently used in modern India as a means to enhance a group's access to political and economic power.

The reorganisation of the Mysore state (now Karnataka State) resulted in a shift of power to the Lingayats, a priestly sect, the members of which work mostly as agriculturists. It has been estimated that in Karnataka, a little more than 20 per cent of the population are Lingayats, between 13 and 14 per cent Okkaligas, and about 17 to 18 per cent Harijans (Untouchables). Obviously, none of those communities has a clear-cut majority and each of them can be reduced to the status of minority if other groups combine against it.

The priestly Brahmins, who rank highest in the ritual caste hierarchy, are numerically insignificant. They used to own land. Over the last 60 years or so they have increasingly moved to the cities, attracted by employment opportunities. As a result of recent land reforms against absentee landowners, many Brahmins have lost their land titles.

Most Lingayats, on the other hand, have remained in the rural areas. Land reform has induced them to change from landowners to owner-cultivators.

The artisan castes perform their traditional occupations for landowning patrons and get paid by them in grain at each harvest. They own very little land. In the most prosperous agricultural areas, they are fully occupied performing their crafts. In those villages in which they are too numerous, they either become agricultural labourers or emigrate. Only the blacksmith and the carpenter are vital for the village economy and the demand for their skills ensures them better wages.

Beside the artisans, there are servicing castes, quasi-landless, which also get paid in kind. They usually occupy an extremely low status. They used to be called Untouchables and are now known as Harijans or Scheduled Castes.

Although there is a considerable coincidence between a caste's ritual and economic status, it is important to remember that castes are not necessarily economically homogeneous: rich and poor households can be found within one and the same caste.

One of the dilemmas of modern India is that while political decentralisation makes for more intimate association between the people and the Government, it is also likely to reinforce the tyranny of regionally dominant castes. Devolution of power in India is seriously complicated by caste.

Planning in a Federal Context

From as far back as 1910, when Sir M. Vishveshwarayya, the then Diwan of Mysore, introduced public planning in what was to become Karnataka(8), the state has had an official role in planning and promoting economic development. But more systematic and integrated planning had to wait until after Independence, when the government of India launched the first Five-Year Plan (1951). There have been six five-year plans and the seventh is underway.

To plan for a country of India's size and diversity is a mammoth exercise, all the more complex because of India's federal structure. National powers include defense, foreign affairs, communications, key industries in the public sector and other nationwide functions and interests, whereas the States have under their jurisdiction agriculture, irrigation, power, primary education, health, social services and other local domains. In some overlapping areas, both the central powers and the States can legislate (as in planning and in higher education).

The central government has well-defined sources of revenue: income tax, excise duties and Customs. The sources of revenue for the States are sales tax, land revenue, agricultural income tax, octroi, etc. Though the functions as well as the sources of revenue are divided between the states and the national government, the Constitution perpetuates India's strong centralist tradition(9). The national government shares part of its revenues with the states, to help them finance their plans and to cover the non-plan revenue gap(10). It thus exercises considerable influence on the state's plans. In practice, the National Planning Commission (henceforth NPC) formulates the overall framework of the plan, its size, and the major policies required to implement it. Each state is informed of the financial outlays for its plans and receives guidelines regarding the formulation of sectoral proposals. Usually, the states bargain for a higher outlay but they are not willing to raise their own resources. The state planning officials meet with their national counterparts and the NPC to come to an informal understanding, after which the detailed sectoral plans are worked out by the respective national ministries, put

8. See M.B. Nanjappa, Karnataka Pragati Patha (in Kannada), published by the Director, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Bangalore, 1974.

9. See H.K. Paranjape, Centre-State Relations in Planning, New Delhi, Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1970.

10. The gap between the expenditure required to meet the commitments of the previous plans and the State's revenues.

together by the NPC and presented as a draft memorandum on the Plan to the National Development Council(11). After the Draft Plan is approved by the NDC, Parliament approves it.

The procedure adopted in planning is so centralised that the states have often complained about the highhandedness of the NPC. Several observers have also pointed out(12) that the NPC functions like an economic super-cabinet because the Prime Minister is its Chairman and several Cabinet Ministers are members. In recent years, attempts have been made to decentralise planning and to develop the planning machinery at the state level. There has been a gradual reduction in the role of the national planners and various administrative measures have been implemented to overcome the uncertainty regarding the availability of resources. Nevertheless, the States are still heavily dependent on the central government(13) and many local governments have yet to develop their own planning units.

Until recently, since the central and the state governments usually belonged to the same political party, fewer conflicting interests arose at these NDC discussions. But as political heterogeneity between the national authorities and the states increased, the clamour for decentralisation became louder. If the discussions of the NDC to prepare a final version of the sixth Five-Year Plan are a guide(14), the central powers are under pressure by the states to increase assistance and to transfer to them a large number of centrally-sponsored initiatives.

There has been a shift in the national planning strategy after the fifth Five-Year Plan. Until then, economic growth and distributive justice were regarded as separate objectives to be attained simultaneously. The plans set independent targets for production and for the provision of public services to the poor. This approach

11. The National Development Council (NDC) was established in 1952. It consists of the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet, members of the NPC and the Chief Ministers of various States. Earlier, the functions of the NDC remained vague, but after its reconstitution in 1967, its task is to lay down the guidelines for the NPC to formulate the plans. The role of the NPC has now been confined to the formulation of the plans.

12. See Jagota, S.P., "Some Constitutional Aspects of Planning", in Ralph Braibanti and Joseph J. Spengler (eds.), Administration and Economic Development, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1963, pp. 173-201.

13. See Paranjape, H.K., op. cit.

14. See Times of India, 10th January, 1979 and 12th January, 1979.

was changed in the fifth Five-Year Plan. The NPC, realising that only the rich had benefitted from development, decided to give top priority to the eradication of poverty. The Plan aimed at providing the lowest thirty per cent of the population with a monthly per capita income of forty rupees (at 1972-1973 prices) and with adequate nutrition, and to ensure basic services such as elementary education for children, minimum public health services, provision of drinking water and electrification, as well as urban slum improvement in the larger towns. It also introduced other poverty-oriented initiatives such as the Small Farmer Development Agency, the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Programme and the Drought-Prone Areas Programme.

What is distinctive is that these minimum needs programmes became the centrepiece of the Plan. All investment targets, allocations and choices with regard to technology, production, import mixes and other economic policies are subordinated to the minimum needs targets. This implies the recognition by the planners that growth itself is not enough to abolish poverty and that special measures are required to ensure social justice.

Planning in Karnataka

Until recently, planning in Karnataka was an inter-departmental affair. There was a Planning Department, dependent on the state's Department of Finance. The Secretary of the Planning Department was also the Development Commissioner. Recently, with the appointment of a Professor of Economics, the status of the post has been raised and it is often said in the administration that the Secretary of the Planning Department has become a "Super-Secretary".

To provide broad guidelines for planning at the state level, the government has set up a Planning Board which includes, in addition to the Secretary of the Planning Department, the Chief Minister, members of the Cabinet and a few distinguished academicians.

Previously, state planning was, essentially, an exercise in collating schemes worked out by the different government departments. According to a recent official report, although the importance of district planning was theoretically accepted,

"it is not being done in a systematic way so as to bring about a proper integration of the district plans in the state Plan. The planning exercise at present consists of the communication of sector financial allocations to the Heads of Departments at the state level, who in turn (and sometimes in a leisurely manner) communicate the district allocations to the District Heads of Departments without a

critical appreciation or assessment of relative needs. The District Heads of Departments, in turn, prepare schemes in departmental isolation, ignoring the interdependence among sectors. The prospective district plans are rarely used in deciding the choice of programmes and priorities. Thus, district planning has been little more than an arithmetical exercise, a summation of district departmental schemes. At the state level, the planning exercise continues to be concentrated on the clearance of schemes by the Planning and Finance Departments. Changes from the present position are desirable if we are to integrate sectoral planning with special planning taking note of the variations, the resource endowments and the needs of different areas."(15)

In order to make district planning and state planning more effective, the Government of Karnataka has restructured the planning machinery in its annual plan for 1978-79. Responsibilities have been redistributed between the district and the state. Minor irrigation, soil conservation, forests, fisheries, animal husbandry, small-scale and rural industries, primary and secondary education come now under the jurisdiction of the district, while major and medium irrigation projects and industries as well as power generation and distribution are taken care of by the state government. After deducting state sector expenditures, 75 per cent of the remainder of the annual outlay will be distributed in the districts. The reserve of 25 per cent covers additional state allocations to make up for eventual shortages resulting from the implementation of district plans or to speed up certain priority programmes(16).

Inter-district allocations are decided according to a set of weighted criteria such as population, proportion of landless agricultural labour, value of agricultural output per hectare, industrial output, population served by commercial and co-operative banks, number of villages electrified, per capita consumption of power and proportion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the population. Interdepartmental sharing at the district level is discussed at the District Planning Committee between departmental heads following broad but firm guidelines from the State Government. The resulting plan is then sent for approval to the District Development Council(17).

15. Proceedings of the Government of Karnataka (no date). See Appendix 3.

16. See Appendix 3.

17. The District Development Council forms the third level in the Panchayati Raj Programme of decentralisation accepted in Karnataka. This Council is a nominated body and not an elected one.

Despite efforts to decentralise planning, it is clear that even in the new scheme, the role of state government continues to be dominant. However, it is hoped that in time decentralisation will reduce pressure from individual members of the Legislative Assembly on the various ministries to divert too great a proportion of the available funds to their own regions and villages(18).

Karnataka's Sixth Plan (1978-83) is an extension of the Fifth. The "poor were and are again at the centre of the planning strategy"(19). Priority is given to irrigation and power. In the fifth Five-Year Plan, more than half the outlay of 11,340 million rupees went to irrigation and power. In the Sixth Plan, total outlay was more than doubled to 25,720 million rupees. Of this, 15,830 million, or more than 62 per cent, has been devoted to rural development. But since it was realised that there is no direct and automatic relationship between growth and employment, employment itself has been made a major goal. For the benefit of the poorest, for whom job opportunities are difficult to provide, 3,251 million rupees have been allotted to the Minimum Needs Programme(20).

The 1978-83 plan lists several poverty-focussed measures. One is the Land Reform Act. In 1974, after Mr. Urs became Chief Minister, the 1961 Land Reform Act was amended. Leasing out of agricultural land was banned, except for soldiers and seamen, under penalty of forfeiture of the leased land. Land which had already been leased by 1st March, 1974, has been vested in the government. Compensation is due to the owners according to set rules. The lands taken over are distributed to the actual tenants, who have to file applications before the land tribunal to claim occupancy rights. In Karnataka, there is at least one tribunal for every taluk (sub-district) and two where the workload is heavy. Before conferring ownership, tribunals conduct summary inquiries to ascertain whether the land was leased and whether the applicant was the actual tenant. Part of the compensation due to the dispossessed landowner is owed by the new owner. Payment may take the form of a down payment of two thousand rupees supplemented by instalments spread over a period of twenty years. For this purpose, former tenants can obtain credit from the State Land Development Bank.

18. Personal communication from an official in the Government of Karnataka.

19. See Karnataka Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83, Planning Department Government of Karnataka, p. i.

20. Ibid., pp. i-vi.

According to the law, land tribunals are chaired by the Assistant Commissioner and include a member of either the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes. One seat is usually reserved for a Member of the Legislative Assembly. The remaining two members are not public officers. The tribunal functions with a quorum of three and on the basis of majority vote. Its decisions are final; no civil court may intervene and contenders can only submit a writ petition to the High Court(21).

The Land Reform Act of 1974 has reduced ceilings on holdings from eighteen to ten acres per family for wet lands and from 216 acres to 54 acres per family for dry land. Surplus land is distributed among the landless. According to one estimate, since the law came into effect, nearly half-a-million tenants have become land-holders and nearly 400,000 acres have been distributed to the landless in Karnataka(22).

However, land reform is just a first step towards a solution to the problem of poverty, because the beneficiaries still have to become economically viable. The state government therefore proposes to supplement land reform with loans, seed-distribution, market and storage facilities and technological assistance(23).

Small farmers (one to two-and-a-half acres of wet land or two-and-a-half to five acres of dry land), marginal farmers (less than one acre of wet land or two-and-a-half acres of dry land) and agricultural labourers (those who derive over 50 per cent of their income from agricultural labour) qualify for assistance. A Small Farmers Development Agency has been set up and a Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Programme initiated to assist the poorest groups, finance improvements on their land, promote animal husbandry and the cultivation of cash crops, buy agricultural implements, etc. These agencies also conduct training programmes in agriculture, poultry, sericulture, carpentry and other root-level economic skills. Already in operation in 10 districts, the programmes should cover the entire state by 1978-79. So far, 500 million rupees have been allocated to 3,200,000 farmers. By 1982-83, 1,000,000 farmers should have received subsidies.

After the Emergency was declared in 1975, the then Prime Minister announced a 20-point programme. One point was the release of bonded labourers. In Karnataka, bank

21. Under articles 226 or 227 of the Constitution.

22. See D.M. Nanjundappa, Development with Social Justice, Oxford and IBH Publishing House, Delhi, 1976, p. 13.

23. This entire section is based on the Karnataka Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83.

credit was made available to 8,000 of them and co-operative societies of former bonded labourers were formed and given special preference for government contracts.

Beside the 20-point programme, the government passed a Debt Relief Act cancelling the debts incurred by those whose annual income was less than 2,400 rupees(24). It is estimated that some 1,160 billion rupees worth of debts were thus liquidated. In addition, small consumption loans were made available to the poorest through co-operative societies to tide over recurring crises such as illnesses or deaths in the family, or to cover the cost of religious ceremonies (see Chapter 5). Each family is entitled to borrow 125 rupees. So far, nearly 500,000 families have benefited from such loans.

Artisans form another underprivileged section of rural society. Under the Differential Interest Programme, artisans in eleven backward districts of Karnataka are entitled to loans at a subsidised rate of interest of 4 per cent per annum.

To provide this type of financial assistance, co-operative credit societies have had to be restructured. Several societies were merged and membership has been opened to all. Chairmen are supposed to be small or marginal farmers and the majority on the board of directors should be poor. However, in reality, this is not always the case (see Chapter 5).

Since 1972-73, nearly 800,000 families have received house sites for the landless and more than 270 million rupees have been spent so far. As a follow-up, a People's Housing Programme was launched, to help recipients build their houses. By the end of March 1978, 120,000 houses had been constructed and 100 million rupees had been set aside for the programme in 1978-79.

Under the Minimum Needs Programme, the government has also undertaken a massive operation to feed 1,700,000 out of 4,300,000 under-nourished children.

An Old Age Pension Programme has been started. Pensions of 40 rupees per month are given to destitutes above 65 years of age, to disabled people and to lepers, at an estimated cost of more than 85 million rupees per annum.

To deal with the under-utilisation of labour and the unemployment which are increasingly acute in the rural areas (see Chapter 5), the Government launched, during the slack season of 1979 (March), an Employment Assurance

24. Recently the income ceiling has been raised to 4,800 rupees.

Programme. It should provide employment for one hundred days for all able-bodied adults who seek manual work at a minimum wage of 4 rupees per day (see page 41). It is estimated that 700,000 workers in 91 taluks (sub-districts) will be able to avail themselves of this opportunity and that the total cost of the programme would amount to 160 million rupees per year. The activities promoted would include minor irrigation work, desilting of tanks, creation of fresh water fisheries, soil conservation, canals, rural roads, etc.

In addition, the Urs Government has made special provisions for the rehabilitation of the backward classes and communities in Karnataka. In September 1972, a "Backward Classes Commission of Enquiry" was set up under the Chairmanship of L.G. Havanur (now Minister for Law) to investigate the conditions of backward classes and to produce both a set of criteria to define underprivilege, and recommendations to alleviate deprivation. It took the Commission three years to bring out a four volume report, particularly due to the unhelpful attitude of some departments and officers.

Due to the non-availability of trained investigators in sufficient numbers, the government had to modify its earlier order and appoint the Social Welfare Inspectors of each taluk (sub-district) and Sanitary/Health Inspectors of Corporations and Municipalities as Investigators(25).

Many of those who gave evidence before the Commission emphasized that there were so many backward people in Karnataka that it was easier to define those who were not backward than those who were.

The population of backward classes in Karnataka is more than eighty-five per cent While determining the backwardness of a particular community, its occupation and income should be taken into account. A family whose income is less than eight thousand rupees per annum should be considered as backward, irrespective of caste. However, the traditional communities of washermen, fishermen, etc., should be treated as backward. All Class IV servants in government service should be treated as backward. Industrial labourers should be treated as backward(26).

In its recommendations, the Commission suggested using a composite set of criteria rather than one simple index to determine the social backwardness of castes and

25. Havanur, L.G., 1975, Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Vol. 1, p. 308.

26. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 261.

communities. Some castes which occupy a high rank in Hindu society, such as Temple Servants, are economically and educationally backward. Similarly, some castes which occupy a low status in the hierarchy, such as Bhunts, need not be regarded as backward if they are economically and educationally advanced.

The report deplores the corroding influence caste has on society but realises that there seems little possibility of its abolition in the foreseeable future. "Neither the advanced castes nor the depressed and backward castes have an urge to annihilate the caste system"(27). The notion of Karma as an explanation of caste differentiation is still widely accepted even by the Scheduled Castes themselves(28). A sample survey of Scheduled Castes living in rural areas indicates that of 2,437 sample households interviewed, 88.22 per cent still believe in Karma, 61.30 per cent were convinced that Karma is responsible for their birth in a low caste, and 66.52 per cent do not think untouchability an inhuman practice. Only 38.45 per cent of the Scheduled Caste sample households interviewed were aware of the legal abolition of untouchability(29). If the caste system is so deeply rooted and so widely accepted even among those who are its victims, it is not surprising that Indian policy-makers accept the social reality of its continued existence, at least within the foreseeable future.

The Havanur Report illustrates the need for sociological, economic and educational data on the various castes and criticises the Government's decision to eliminate caste data from Census collection. "One fails to understand the logic of the contention that the abolition of caste particulars in Census was right, when other particulars relating to religion, race, sex, place of birth, descent and language are enumerated in the Census It is argued by some that the caste system has been abolished by the Constitution, and that therefore caste particulars should not find a place in the Census Reports. We would only say that they are either misguided or insincere. Neither the Constitution nor any law has abolished the caste system. We go a step further and say that the Constitution and the laws in India have recognised the caste system and they intend continuing the Hindu caste system"(30).

27. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 312.

28. Karma means deed or action. It is the doctrine that every action receives its retribution and, combined in Hinduism with the doctrine of transmigration, makes it possible to explain the present state with reference to actions in past lives.

29. Parvathamma, C., 1976, Socio-economic Survey of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Karnataka, University of Mysore, Tables 176, 202 and 209.

30. Havanur, L.G., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 334.

One cannot help but wonder whether the elimination of data on caste is connected with the concept of "convenient" statistics. Many politicians prefer not to be confronted with information which exposes unpleasant facts of social reality. Whatever the reason, there now appears to exist a dearth of reliable information on the standards of living of the different castes. While the Havanur Report argues that caste cannot be taken as the sole basis for discriminatory measures in favour of backward classes -- education, income and other social variables also need to be considered in this context -- it does stress that the caste system symbolises institutionalised inequality. Therefore, reliable information on how different communities are affected by its operation seems to be an essential pre-condition of policies aimed at reducing its inegalitarian practice.

However, since the Commission still regards caste, and in particular sub-caste, as the key test of backwardness, some groups are deemed eligible for benefits denied to other groups similarly placed.

As Havanur(31) himself explains, his aim is to lift the different castes to the same level so that there would be equal numbers of leading lawyers, doctors, engineers and other professionals in the advanced and in the backward castes. According to him, meritorious people would then act as "beacons", inspiring other members of the backward castes. He considers caste status an integral feature of Hinduism, which neither law nor constitution can abolish(32).

The Karnataka Government has broadly accepted the recommendations of the Havanur Commission. Government posts and seats in the universities are reserved in the following manner:

Backward Communities	20 per cent
Backward Castes	10 per cent
Backward Tribes	5 per cent
Special Group(33)	5 per cent

This is in addition to the 18 per cent reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Additional privileges for the Backward Classes include special assistance for housing, credit, etc. A list of communities, castes and tribes which qualify for these

31. Havanur, L.G., Personal Communication.

32. Government Order No. SWL 123 BCA79, Bangalore, 1st May, 1979.

33. I.e. that group which consists of only economically backward sections of the population. Recently, the State Government has increased the quota for this group from five to fifteen per cent.

benefits has been drawn up and those who qualify must produce caste certificates from the Block Development Officer of their respective block(34). In addition, their annual income must be lower than ten thousand rupees for the whole family.

The Backward Classes Commission Report has raised a big controversy. Several conferences and seminars have been organised to discuss it. Representatives of castes and communities excluded from the list of backward classes and leading members of the upper castes, including Brahmins and Lingayats, have united to oppose it. A leading academician, member of the State Planning Board, has claimed that the Government's acceptance of the Havanur Commission Report is a retrograde step(35). On the other hand, critics of the Report were attacked as caste-minded conservatives, wanting to perpetuate upper-caste hegemony by demanding that only economic criteria be used to define backwardness. Whatever the merits of these arguments, the initiative of the Urs government has heightened the class consciousness of the backward and minority castes and communities in Karnataka.

Economic Progress in Karnataka

The Chief Minister recently claimed(36) that not only have measures to uplift the weaker sections of the society been implemented in the state but also that the annual income of the State has increased from 3.2 to 8.5 billion rupees between 1972 and 1978. According to the Department of Planning(37), state income between 1970-71 and 1974-75 had an annual growth rate of 6.24 per cent at constant prices -- this being the highest for all the states in India. A similar claim is made for the growth rate of per capita income, which is stated to be the highest in India, i.e. 2.55 per cent per annum over the period. However, such an optimistic statement is not borne out by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics(38) which shows that the growth rate at constant prices of per capita national income has been around 1.7 per cent over the period 1970-71 to 1975-76. These statistics indicate that in 1977-78 the growth rate has declined, mainly due to severe drought in 1976-77, when the state per capita income at current prices went down to 631.17 rupees as compared to 784.9 rupees in 1975-76. In 1977-78 the per capita income at current prices climbed

34. A Block is equivalent to a Taluk (Sub-district).

35. See the newspaper Deccan Herald, 5th October, 1978; see also Praj Vani (in Kannada) 21st August, 1978.

36. Indian Express, 28th June, 1979, Bangalore.

37. See Karnataka Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83, p. 10.

38. See Table 1.1.

to 730.13 rupees, but it was still much below the 1975-76 peak(39). In fact, Karnataka is way behind Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat in terms of per capita income in 1974-75(40).

To judge the performance of the economy on the basis of per capita income alone is misleading where there is considerable inequality of income. A true picture of economic progress must take into consideration the incidence of poverty in Karnataka. Several studies show that poverty is increasing despite planning efforts.

A study conducted in 1963-64 by E.P.W. De Costa(41) using National Sample Survey (NSS) data, which defined poverty in terms of monthly per capita expenditure of 15 rupees, estimated that the proportion of the poor was 44 per cent in Karnataka while it was 34.6 per cent for India altogether (Table 1.3). In 1973, according to the Draft Fifth Five-Year Plan, nearly 45 per cent of the population in Karnataka lived below the poverty line, defined as a daily per capita expenditure of 1.10 rupees.

These figures must be regarded as an underestimate if the study conducted by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics of the government of Karnataka is any guide. This study, conducted in September 1973 on the basis of a selection of one village from each of the 19 districts of the state, reveals that nearly 70 per cent of the rural population lived below the poverty line calculated at a per capita monthly expenditure of 37.50 rupees, most of the poor being landless labourers or marginal farmers(42). It also points out that nearly 53 per cent of the rural households are indebted, 60 per cent of these having borrowed to meet household expenditures.

39. Information provided by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics Government of Karnataka.

40. See Table 1.2.

41. Bureau of Economics and Statistics Report, cyclostyled, undated.

42. Bureau of Economics and Statistics Report, cyclostyled, undated.

Table 1.1.
PER CAPITA INCOME IN THE STATE OF KARNATAKA(*)

Year	At current prices (in Rs.)	At 1956-57 prices (in Rs.)	Index number of per capita in come with 1956- 57 as base year
1956-57	230.5	230.5	100
1960-61	285.3	237.7	103.1
1965-66	388.8	244.7	106.2
1970-71	540.4	312.2	135.4
1971-72	550.1	313.8	136.1
1972-73	569.9	289.3	125.5
1973-74	703.7	306.8	133.2
1974-75(**)	783.9	327.5	142.2
1975-76(***)	784.9	338.6	147.0

Source:

* Data for the period up to 1973 taken from Karnataka Pragati Patha (in Kannada) published by M.B. Nanjappa, Director, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore, 1974, p. 38. Data for the period 1973-76 taken from Statistical Outline of Karnataka, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Bangalore, 1977. Figures rounded to one decimal place.

** Provisional estimates.

*** Rough estimates.

Table 1.2.

COMPARISON OF KARNATAKA STATE PER CAPITA INCOME
WITH OTHER STATES OF THE INDIAN UNION
IN THE YEARS 1969-70 AND 1974-75

	Per capita income at current prices (in Rs.) 1969-70(*)	Per capita income at current prices (in Rs.) 1974-75(**)
National Average	589	995
Punjab	945	1,482
Haryana	788	1,217
Maharashtra	752	1,271
Tamil Nadu	616	814
Gujarat	665	1,038
Andhra Pradesh	515	1,003
Karnataka	502	784

Sources:

* Karnataka Pragati Patha, p. 39.

** Karnataka Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83, p. 10.

Table 1.3

DISTRIBUTION OF PER CAPITA INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
PER DAY IN KARNATAKA STATE (RURAL AND URBAN)

Rs.	Rural		Urban Combined		Rural		Urban	
	Income Basis	Expenditure Basis	Income Basis	Expenditure Basis	Income Basis	Expenditure Basis	Income Basis	Expenditure Basis
A	Less than 0.55	Bottom 10%	Bottom 10%	Bottom 12%	Bottom 12%	Bottom 7%	Bottom 5%	
	0.55-1.10	Next 34%	Next 35%	Next 35%	Next 35%	Next 28%	Next 35%	
B	Less than 1.10	Bottom 44%	Bottom 45%	Bottom 47%	Bottom 47%	Bottom 35%	Bottom 40%	
	1.10-2.19	Next 38%	Next 38%	Next 38%	Next 39%	Next 39%	Next 32%	
C	A+B+C	Less than 2.19	Bottom 82%	Bottom 83%	Bottom 85%	Bottom 86%	Bottom 74%	Bottom 72%
	D	2.19-4.11	Next 12%	Next 13%	Next 11%	Next 11%	Next 14%	Next 19%
D	E	4.11-8.22 or more	Top 6%	Top 4%	Top 3%	Top 12%	Top 9%	
	D+E	8.22 or more	Top 18%	Top 17%	Top 15%	Top 15%	Top 26%	Top 28%

Source: Draft Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) pp. 4-5, Karnataka State: Director of Printing, 1978.

It can be argued that in a state where more than 2 million households are estimated to be below the poverty line, government's efforts to eradicate poverty are most inadequate. Indeed, have these efforts benefited the target groups at all? Has their limited success, or failure, anything to do with the perspectives on development held by the policy-makers in the state? This is what we have tried to examine(43).

The methods we followed are described in Appendix A.

43. It is estimated that there are 2,700,000 small and marginal farmers as well as 27 lakh agricultural labourers in the state.

Chapter 2

BASIC NEEDS STRATEGIES AND KARNATAKA POLICY-MAKERS

"Do not unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."

Bernard Shaw

Social Heterogeneity of Policy-Makers

The politicians and civil servants we interviewed for this study come from various castes, classes, regions and religions, and differ in educational achievements, political views, experience and social background.

The civil servants belong to the higher social groups in the caste hierarchy: one is a Muslim, another belongs to the minority Jain community; two of them are Brahmins, one is an Okkaliya, one a Lingayat and one a Mudaliar (an upper Tamilian caste).

By contrast, caste membership among politicians is more heavily weighted in favour of the lower castes: one is a Brahmin, one a Kshatrya, one a Lingayat, one a Muslim, while the rest are from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes(1). Caste mix among politicians in general and cabinet ministers in particular reflects the efforts of the Chief Minister to break the political monopoly which Lingayats and Okkaliyas previously enjoyed because of their numerical and economic preponderance.

The class origin of these policy-makers is even more varied than their caste background. The frequent assumption of a coincidence between the ranking of caste and class is not borne out by our information on these 20 policy-makers. Among the bureaucrats, for instance, the Okkaliya comes from wealthy peasant stock, while the Lingayat's family was extremely poor, though high in the caste hierarchy. He had to work very hard to achieve his reasonably affluent position. An extremely able and

1. The caste of the female Speaker of the Assembly could not be ascertained.

committed man, he still remembers vividly earlier financial difficulties and is keen to alleviate the worst poverty, particularly among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He explained that, although he comes from a very poor background, his poverty was not as crippling as that of an equally poor Harijan, and said "As a Lingayat I had a certain self-esteem and self-assurance, which helped me pull myself up by my own efforts, which is what the Scheduled Castes seem to lack".

Although this observation may hold in general, some of our interviewees constitute an exception. One of the politicians in our sample, for instance, comes from a Scheduled Tribe but managed to qualify as a lawyer and is now a Cabinet Minister.

While the Brahmin politician, too, had to work hard to achieve his present economic position, the Muslim Minister, on the other hand, belongs to a family of big landowners. A qualified lawyer, he emphasized that giving up his law practice to become a politician involved a considerable economic sacrifice which he made only because some important Congress leaders strongly urged him to stand for one of the State's constituencies and because he wanted to do public service. He is a staunch supporter of Mrs. Gandhi's "20 point programme", which he claims represents the first real attempt by the Government to think in terms of the poor. He regards population growth as the main obstacle to development and claims that "whatever is done is eaten up by population growth; whatever is achieved is diluted by the need to provide for increasing numbers". Though concerned about the welfare of the poor, he did not even consider the possibility of popular participation in the formulation of basic needs programmes because he believes it is the responsibility of the government to provide basic facilities such as housing, education and health, irrespective of the poor's own set of priorities.

By contrast, the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly believed in working with the people. She got into politics through social work, inspired by a foreign couple who had organised embroidery work societies for women. She successfully organised the women's clubs in her district and is now trying to involve the Deputy Commissioner with these community-based clubs so that they may qualify for official grants. She claims it is an advantage to be a woman in politics and finds it educational to work with men. Her constituency is so backward that people are happy if somebody listens to their problems and "women make better listeners than men". She stressed the importance of her family's, and in particular her husband's, support for her career ("After all, peace at home is important"). She has not been to college, yet her intelligence and her wisdom are

impressive. A dynamic personality, coupled with her motherly serenity, make her a committed social welfare advocate.

Changing ministerial responsibilities of senior politicians add another dimension to their experiences. The present Minister for Agriculture had earlier been Minister in Charge of Co-operatives, and became familiar with the credit needs of the villagers. He now claims that loan facilities constitute the most important basic need of the poorest rural people. The Minister for Finance, on his part, previously held the labour portfolio and had personal contact with mine workers and with their problems.

Senior civil servants have an even more varied background in terms of academic qualifications and past experiences. The Development Commissioner obtained a science degree before joining the State Civil Service and he was later selected for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). A switch from science to administration has helped him to appreciate human problems. His administrative experience has made him query the possibility of radically improving the lot of the poor. "The resources required are just not available", he emphasized.

One of the three Joint Directors of the Department of Social Welfare also sees serious constraints on the State's ability to help the poor. He has a degree in social work and comes from an upper middle-class Hyderabad family.

He joined the Karnataka Administrative Service in the mid-fifties. As an outsider, he feels discriminated against when it comes to postings and promotion because local officers with political connections get preferential treatment. He claims that his training in social work and his personal contact with the poor has made him sensitive to their needs, while his administrative experience has taught him the socio-political reality within which basic needs programmes have to operate. In his official duties, he concentrates on programmes to help the Scheduled Castes in the State and he is firmly convinced that education represents the most important basic need which all poor people share. Unconcerned with the content of education, he regards universal adult literacy as the panacea for the problem of poverty. His colleague, another Joint Director for the Department of Social Welfare, also attaches crucial importance to education, though he is less certain (he explained that he was promoted to this post only six months ago from a position in the Revenue Department). He has a B.A. degree in Kannada and an M.A. in Sanskrit; his father, a small Muslim trader, was keen on education.

The District Deputy Commissioner of Bangalore, too, regards lack of education as the main obstacle to development, particularly when it comes to popular participation. He stressed that "participation requires education". He has extensive experience in this field. After graduating in economics, he joined the Education Department where, since his responsibilities were mainly of an administrative nature, he decided to become a fully fledged administrator and was subsequently promoted to the IAS. He was Registrar of Karnataka University at Dharwar, from which position he was transferred to his present post. We found him in conversation with a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) whose constituency lies within Bangalore District and who was stressing the need for more Government money to provide a better infrastructure for his constituents. He listened attentively and sympathetically. Afterwards he pointed out that Government had certain rules limiting how district funds could be allocated and that he had to follow the rules. Both men showed respect for each other's integrity in handling development problems.

The Director of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics graduated in economics before joining the Bureau as a junior officer. He is understandably proud to have risen from the ranks. Coming from a peasant background, he still has deep roots in the village, to which he attributes his empathy with the rural poor. He complained bitterly that very few policy-makers understood the problems at the grass roots level and emphasized the need for anthropological micro-studies to throw light on intra-village power structures. These he regards as the major obstacle to helping the poor. "What we need is many committed people who help the poorest to organise into pressure groups -- this is the only way they will ever be able to make their voices heard", he stressed.

The Director of the Drought-Prone Areas programme, a Ph. D. in economics, was responsible for producing district gazetteers before his present post. He is also in charge of the formulation and evaluation of the programmes and has collaborated in several World Bank projects. He, too, explained his empathy with the rural poor in terms of his own rural background, though he comes from a well-to-do family. He regards the low quality of the administration as the major obstacle to helping the poor in achieving their own aspirations and quoted a study he conducted among prize-winning village-level workers, showing that hardly any of them knew the officers in charge of the various services which they were supposed to make available to the villagers. "How can such an administration co-ordinate efforts?" he asked in despair. He is a prolific writer, has already published several books on economic development, sounded thoroughly disillusioned and admitted he would like to work with a

development agency outside India, where he might be more effective in helping to alleviate poverty.

The attitudes of the public servants towards basic needs problems is affected not only by their social background but also by their career pattern. Senior administrators who have been promoted through the ranks appear inclined to work along bureaucratic grooves and resent having to change old-established regulations. Since "basic needs" is a fairly new concept, it requires a re-orientation which they resent; many prefer to follow customary administrative practice and pay only lip-service to what they regard as a new fad. By contrast, those senior administrators who joined the Public Service with post-graduate degrees and/or after working as professional academicians seem much readier to experiment with new ideas.

For instance, a University Vice-Chancellor is a member of the Karnataka Planning Board; another recently declined the offer of a Vice-Chancellorship to become a high ranking civil servant. One of them explained that he wanted to work in an applied field so that he could test the extent to which economic theories and concepts can help in ensuring "Redistribution with Growth"(2). He expressed great concern for the well-being of the poorest and wanted to make certain that the underprivileged became the beneficiaries, not the victims, of development programmes. He explained his commitment by his own personal experience of severe deprivation. As an undergraduate he faced crises in his family. Partitioning of property and intra-familial quarrels forced him to find accommodation for his elderly parents and three younger siblings. His early experience of homelessness may explain the priority he now attaches to making provisions for Scheduled Caste housing. Similarly, his concern to aid the poorest Scheduled Caste families may be a way of expressing the gratitude he acknowledges to one particular Harijan household, whose members helped to produce the subsistence food his family needed while he was struggling to study at University.

The appointment of senior academicians to strategic administrative posts is a novel venture which, if it proves successful, may well encourage closer links between the State's administration and University staff. Much is expected of those academicians/civil servants who are encouraged to function in an environment that is not too constraining. The four academicians/civil servants we interviewed were economists with doctorates. They stressed the importance of providing opportunities to the

2. Chennery H. et al., 1974 Redistribution with Growth, O.U.P. London.

poor to enable them to become self-reliant income-earners. They deplored what they regard as a wrong set of priorities held by many of their colleagues. One of them told us that at a recent Planning Board meeting in which a full-employment programme was discussed, aimed at providing every adult with work at the minimum daily rate of 4 rupees, many Board members were appalled by the amount involved. Yet, at a previous meeting, they had readily sanctioned a cost-of-living increase in the pay of all Karnataka Administrative Servants, amounting to almost twice as much as the full-employment programme. He became so incensed that in an impassioned speech he threatened to expose their hypocrisy. The Board Members ultimately agreed to the proposed full-employment scheme.

These senior economists, who have chosen to get involved in policy-making, are responsible for a number of policy innovations. The decentralised planning programme included in Appendix 3 constitutes one such example. It provides for the allocation of outlays among the districts in terms of indicators which favour the poorest regions. This contrasts with the previous Intensive Agricultural Development Programme, according to which the district with the highest growth potential received most favoured treatment to ensure optimising output. It is worthwhile to note here that the new weighting system aims at reducing regional imbalances rather than at raising the standard of living of the poorest. Moreover, decentralisation of planning does not necessarily imply popular participation in policy making. It remains to be seen how effective this new decentralised planning arrangement will be in providing basic needs, particularly when countered by the entrenched village power structures. Local politicians may be able to exert greater influence over administrative decisions at district than at state level, which is likely to reinforce patron-client relationships.

The Rhetoric of Poverty

All our informants professed to be acutely sensitive to the need to eradicate poverty and social discrimination. As already mentioned, a number of them complained that most policy-makers pay only lip-service to the measures aiming to help the under-privileged. Even so, it is significant that everyone should claim, however casually, that the abolition of poverty and social discrimination must now have higher priority among development objectives. Particularly since, in Hanavur's words, "ideas of social and economic equality, individual freedom and human dignity were not known to Indians until the British rule was established"(3).

3. Hanavur, L.G., op. cit., p. 1.

It may seem strange that in a country like India, where a large proportion of the population has for a long time suffered severe deprivation, the alleviation of poverty would not have been a central political objective. In fact, "Poverty-Focused Planning" was experimented with in the 1960s(4), a decade before the ILO World Employment Conference popularised the basic needs concept. Basic needs still was one objective among others in central and state government Plans in 1978, rather than being their core purpose. Accepting new ideas takes time and the resulting changes take even longer. In Karnataka, in particular, the role of the Chief Minister in stressing the needs of the poor is generally recognised as crucial.

There now seems to be widespread awareness that Western development models are inappropriate under Indian conditions, partly because of their urban bias.

The problems of a primarily agrarian economy like India cannot be solved through the sort of industrial revolution which took place in Europe. Aping the Western form of transition has, to a large extent, destroyed indigenous, cottage, and village industries(5).

Difficulties which beset attempts to reverse the trend towards industrialisation are illustrated by the Government's Janata housing programme for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Originally, the programme intended to use as much as possible of the village produce in the construction of the houses. Yet the beneficiaries of the programme resented this aspect of the plan. They argued that since most of the privately-built village houses incorporated industrial bricks and tiles, they did not want to have to accept second-best. The Government retreated, and the houses have been built with industrial bricks and tiles. Some of the administrators we interviewed feel that this decision prevented many village artisans from reviving their craft activities and hampered village economics. But although experience shows that industrial production does not yield much employment and benefits only a small section of the community, politicians are reluctant to alienate the Scheduled Castes, who form an important part of their supporters and clients.

4. See N. Raj and B. Minhas.

5. One example is the fact that tiles made by potters have been rapidly replaced by factory-made tiles, to the disadvantage of the potter community and with the resulting loss of rural employment. According to a leading Karnataka politician, the same type of process has affected handloom handicrafts and local oil pressing.

Disenchantment with the Western model of development is reflected in a continued search for alternative models. One of the administrators suggested a Chinese model but quickly added that it should at the same time allow for democracy.

The Dilemma: Paternalistic Government versus Popular Participation

Government is generally expected to play a crucial role in poverty-oriented development programmes. Even the opposition member of the Legislative Assembly implicitly concedes the strategic role of the authorities by holding them responsible for the slow progress made in alleviating the worst evils of deprivation. Politicians of the party in power claim that the present administration has already achieved much, though a lot more remains to be done. They think their party has been kept in office mainly because it managed to implement at least some poor-oriented policies.

Many politicians and most administrators acknowledge that the effectiveness of public policies depends on the efficiency of the administrative structure. At the same time, they recognise the importance of popular participation in the formulation of these policies, to ensure that development programmes meet the requirements of those they are supposed to benefit. Politicians realise that, in theory, their role is that of go-betweens. However, in practice, things do not work out that way. One politician claimed that "there is no rapport between the politicians, the people and the administrators. They actually think that they are apart from the people". Another informant stressed the educative role of politicians and administrators, "It is as much the duty of a politician as it is of administrators to carry out extension activities. It is unfortunate that very few politicians look on this activity as important."

In most statements made by policy-makers, there was ambivalence between a paternalistic approach to the mass of the people, particularly the poorest sectors, and the goal of truly participatory democratic government. Lack of education was again and again held responsible for the shortcomings of popular participation in the design of poor-oriented policies. All the members of the Planning Board stressed the importance of education as a precondition to the improvement of the standard of living of the poorest. Only one of them expressed concern for the type of educational facilities to be provided. Himself a professional economist, he emphasized that "we need to reorient our educational policies and programmes right from the primary level to the university. Only through appropriate education -- formal, non-formal and informal -- appropriate awareness can be created of the

needs as well as the scope of development. The first step in this direction will have to be to train teachers and trainers to take up the massive task of educating and training the concerned, with a view to creating awareness". He also indicated that, so far, "development objectives have been formulated or are being formulated in a hurry, without knowing the problems, potentialities and resources as they have been brought out by several studies. This has resulted in the arousal of hopes which have not been fulfilled. All (these) obstacles ... can be resolved to a very great extent by framing development objectives on the basis of the findings of systematic in-depth studies with regard to the problems and potentialities of planning and implementing appropriate educational and training programmes".

One of the major implicit objectives of such educational re-organisation is to focus on self-reliance. Politicians and administrators complained that the people expect the government to provide them with everything. The authorities in general and the politicians in particular have become patrons. The villagers regard themselves as dependent clients and act accordingly, feeling at the mercy of the authorities and trying their best to manipulate their patrons to their own advantage. Most policy-makers agree that the existing rural power structure needs to be changed to ensure that the underprivileged can make their voice heard. These changes cannot be brought about merely on the basis of guidelines issued by Government or through the use of the bureaucratic machinery. "In the last analysis the problem is political, and unless the weaker sections are educated, motivated and stimulated to organise themselves and function as pressure groups ... it is unlikely that the rural power structure can be altered radically", claimed one outspoken politician who added: "It is possible to attempt some changes through public action, by earmarking loans, giving underprivileged groups special representation on committees and so on. But all this is no substitute for the organised power of the weaker sections in the villages, which alone can alter in a radical fashion the current rural power structure."

Policy-makers' Remoteness from Grass Roots Level

Administrators, more than politicians, expressed awareness of the difficulties created by the distance between policy-makers and the masses whose lives they are supposed to change. "They have no conception of what poverty really means nor of how the poorest live. They design their poverty-oriented policies on the basis of highly unreliable statistics or survey results. The data base on the poorest is too meagre and the remoteness of the policy-makers from the village level is too great to

allow for efficient basic-needs programmes to be designed and implemented", explained one senior official.

Another supported this view by relating his experience. On a routine tour he encountered a team of investigators. They told him that they had been sent to study that village, so that planners could design policies to meet the people's basic needs. The investigators were given schedules listing various items, such as "access road", "primary school", "meeting hall", etc. The questionnaire did not include open-ended questions such as "What do you regard as your most important requirement, which you have not yet had fulfilled?" When our informant put this question to the villagers, they explained that their first priority was to get help to build an embankment which would enable them to irrigate more land. They were much less concerned with the lack of a proper access road or of a school building. They felt they could meet these needs with their own resources as soon as the greater availability of water had increased their output. Statistics are not collected as a fact-finding tool but to confirm policy makers in their established views.

The lack of a face-to-face relationship between members of the Planning Board and the socially underprivileged highlights the importance of the individual policy-maker's experience. Those who come from a rural background have at least seen poverty and the conditions which perpetuate it. In fact, the politicians and administrators who had suffered poverty in early life were those most seriously concerned with finding ways to help the underprivileged. But even in this case, the measures they propose are often piecemeal and lack an integrated vision of the situation to be changed.

The question of whose basic needs are insufficiently met is still hotly debated in Karnataka. What criteria should be used to define those entitled to favoured treatment? Should it be caste, class, income, access to land, education, health, nutrition or other indices of standards of living? This uncertainty allowed for intensive political manoeuvering, with wealthier sections of the community trying to claim the benefits the authorities intended for the truly underprivileged.

The criteria used in defining who ranks as underprivileged not only have a direct impact on the design of basic needs programmes, but are also likely to affect the trends of social change. Politicians seem to realise that if caste remains the most important factor in enabling certain individuals or groups to qualify for preferential treatment, such as the provision of jobs and educational opportunities for the lower castes, this will only reinforce caste differentiation. Moreover, they also appreciate that that type of policy may benefit only

a small proportion of the backward castes, which will result in intra-caste economic differentiation. An inquiry into "Inequality and Poverty in Karnataka", conducted in 1977, found that within the various caste groups, "the degree of inequality was only second highest among Scheduled Caste people and lowest among Brahmins. This is very revealing. It indicates that during the period since independence few Scheduled Caste people have availed themselves of the special opportunities and benefits provided by the government for Scheduled Caste people and have come up, while a large number of others have remained poor"(6).

Perceptions of Basic Needs

Politicians

The orientation of politicians towards the poorest sectors of the population is tinged with an appreciation of the socio-economic realities such as caste, class, scarcity of resources, etc. While they recognise the need to work within the parameters of reality, the suggestions they offer vary, ranging from the provision of credit facilities, housing programmes and improvement in infra-structure to population control (through a dose of coercion, if necessary).

Every politician we contacted mentioned the importance of education. In view of this emphasis on education as a means to help alleviate the worst evils of poverty, it seems surprising that the Karnataka State Plan for 1977-78 allocates to Elementary Education only 11.02 per cent of its total "Outlay on Minimum Needs Programmes" (see Table 2.1). The amount budgeted for education has declined in monetary terms from 2,415 billion rupees in 1976-77 to 2,400 billion in 1977-78, which in view of the rate of inflation represents a drastic cut.

Although politicians talk of redistribution - including the reapportioning of productive assets, like land - Table 2.1. illustrates the fact that they actually approach basic needs in social-welfare terms. As one of them put it, the villages have to be made "lovely places" to live in. Hence houses for the homeless and land for the landless are important. The possibility that what is redistributed may later get further redistributed to the detriment of the poor is ignored. Little emphasis is put on making redistribution effective so that the poor can become self-reliant by increasing their productive

6. Thimmaiah G., 1977, "Inequality of Income and Poverty in Karnataka (A Socio-Economic Profile)", unpublished paper presented at the 60th Indian Economic Conference, Madras.

Table 2.1.

OUTLAY ON MINIMUM NEEDS PROGRAMME(*) (Rs. in 10 million Lakhs)

St. No.	Scheme	1974-75 (Accounts)	1975-76 (Accounts)	1976-77 Budget Estimate	1976-77 Revised Estimate	1977-78 Budget Estimate
1	Elementary Education	51.91 (7.86)	84.44 (10.21)	241.50 (18.76)	241.50 (14.40)	240.00 (11.02)
2	Public Health and Sanitation	48.49 (7.33)	94.91 (11.48)	125.00 (9.71)	140.59 (8.38)	162.22 (7.45)
3	Rural Water Supply	311.11 (47.06)	386.52 (46.75)	468.00 (36.35)	843.00 (50.27)	710.00 (32.62)
4	Rural Roads	28.10 (4.25)	149.64 (18.10)	90.00 (6.99)	103.60 (6.17)	100.00 (4.59)
5	Rural Electrification (KEB)	25.00 (3.78)	25.00 (3.02)	25.00 (1.94)	25.00 (1.49)	25.00 (1.14)
6	House Sites for Landless Labourers	0.08 (0.01)	-	90.00 (6.99)	90.00 (5.37)	49.00 (2.29)
7	Slum Improvement	75.02 (11.35)	-	50.00 (3.88)	50.00 (2.98)	50.00 (2.29)
8	Nutrition	121.39 (18.36)	86.19 (10.44)	198.00 (15.38)	183.00 (10.94)	840.00 (38.60)
	Total	661.10	826.70	1287.50	1676.69	2176.22

Figures in brackets are percentages of total.
(*) Source: Annual Plan, Planning Department, Government of Karnataka, Chap. IV.

capacity and, hence, their ability to earn more. The account of the Planning Board members' response to the suggestion of a full-employment programme illustrates their welfare priorities(7).

The politicians' orientation towards the abolition of poverty is eminently subjective. One of the Ministers now thinks that the Gandhian path is not wrong after all. Even he seemed at a loss when asked to suggest measures to institutionalise increased popular participation in the design of basic needs programmes. His attitude was typical in that it reflected the "handout" notion of development. We build houses for them, we give loans on easy terms to them, we know what is best for them. Lack of first-hand contact with the social reality of poverty may account for their paternalistic attitude towards the poor. Many politicians are completely unaware that the poorest pursue a survival strategy - though within severe constraints - and try to manipulate their patrons to their best advantage. Only a few politicians can accept that the rural communities can formulate and implement development programmes on their own initiative.

Politicians expect administrators to implement governmental policies. One of them outlined that: "administrators are required sometimes to give a shape to the policy determined by the political process and sometimes also to implement it ... The growing dependence on administrators is not a bad sign. The distance between the administrator and the public must be increasingly diminished, until a time comes when the public feel that the administrators are their servants and not some high and mighty person." He was not worried by the problems such a relationship would pose for the administrators, expected to satisfy the conflicting requests of the politicians and the public.

Politicians in office praise the quality of their senior administrators as committed to help the poor and efficient in implementing basic-needs programmes. For the lower-level officials it may occasionally be necessary to adopt a "mother-in-law" approach to get the files moving, but that is about all that is required, pointed out the lady deputy speaker of the Assembly.

On the other hand, the opposition member of the Legislative Assembly thought the bureaucracy too large and unwieldy to be really effective. He, however, put the major blame on the self-seeking politicians of the ruling party.

7. See p. 41 above.

Administrators

Career administrators are so acutely sensitive to the obstacles to poverty-oriented development that some display a tinge of cynicism. They argue that given the existing socio-political structure, only palliative measures can be implemented at best; development is a complex phenomenon with far too many uncertainties. A wide gap exists between what a policy intends and what it achieves. One senior administrator summed up thus: "All that one can do is to do one's job as well as one can".

But this also involves compromises. Career administrators appear to be fully aware of their subordinate position vis-à-vis the politicians. Their eloquent silence and cryptic remarks when asked about the interference of politicians in the administration of basic-needs programmes suggests the compromises they feel obliged to make. Frequently, they have to take what they regard as wrong decisions to suit the needs of a politician: taking a principled stand might adversely affect their career.

One administrator held the view that politicians only support programmes which yield visible and immediate benefits. The option for school buildings rather than the provision of more scholarships for underprivileged children illustrates this attitude; a school lasts as a visible achievement of the politician instrumental in its provision. Scholarships are much less visible, although in the long run they may be more beneficial and productive.

Many administrators are critical of the patronage and vote-catching strategies many politicians employ. Only one of them thought that political interference is good. He distinguished between lobbying and manipulating. While he approves of lobbying, he discourages manipulation, even if this may jeopardise his own career. He cited a recent case when he was involved in allocating places in a newly established hostel for underprivileged students. Since the demand for places exceeded by far their availability, he consulted all the other members of the Selection Committee, most of whom were local politicians, and jointly drew up a set of criteria to act as guidelines in the selection process. When the selection had been completed and one politician complained that his own protégé had not been included, the administrator pointed out the importance of abiding by rules once they have been laid down. He declared his readiness to start the negotiation of the rules for selection all over again, if this was what the politician wanted, but refused to be manipulated.

This is a good example of how a senior administrator can resist politicians. At the same time, senior

officials know the bribery, the "greasing" that goes on among their subordinates, but feel impotent to combat corruption. One senior bureaucrat explained that "even if only a small proportion of the funds intended to help the underprivileged ever reach those whom they are meant to benefit, a little is better than nothing". He illustrated his point by recounting how the Maharaja of Mysore once visited a temple and was so pleased with the priest that he asked him what he would like. The priest's answer was "Please give me ten tins of oil every month to light the sacred lamp". Thereupon the Maharaja promised fifteen tins, saying: "To ensure that ten tins of oil will finally reach the temple, it is best to give fifteen."

Corruption is obviously widespread. The Karnataka Commissioner for Vigilance related that corruption occurs at all levels of society; only poorer offenders readily admit their failings when caught, while wealthier ones who usually operate on a larger scale, deny and try to wriggle out of being accused.

Administrators, like politicians, differ from each other with regard to their priorities in basic-needs programmes, although most of them also have a handout approach. In the same way as politicians, they are influenced in their perception of basic needs by their own experience with individual development projects. A social-welfare officer suggested that the poor do not like community-oriented programmes: he recalled his experience of resettling landless labourers on some land on a co-operative basis. This programme did not succeed until the land was distributed to each family separately. Only then were the individual households prepared to pull their weight.

While politicians tend to view development programmes from the point of view of their own need to be re-elected, administrators are in a better position to assess long-term effects. On the other hand, they take a more bureaucratic approach to development policies, they are highly conscious of jurisdiction and of the danger of treading on colleagues' toes. They see development as the achievement of targets allotted within their bureaucratic domain. This often results in a serious lack of co-ordination.

The difficulties that strict departmental division cause to the underprivileged emerged clearly when we took a Norwegian nutritionist to see a senior official in the Social Welfare Department. The Norwegian lady, who was doing fieldwork in a village, wanted to know how she could best advise the village women to help them earn additional income. The official, an extremely competent and committed man, pointed out that before he could suggest which department had to be approached, he had to

know precisely the nature of the requests of the women in question. The nutritionist said her friends were just groping around and wanted someone to advise them on the options open to them. From what the administrator said, it became obvious that the departmentalisation of the development administration was not geared to meet what these village women regarded as their foremost basic need.

We discussed this problem with several administrators, who all agreed that ordinary villagers, most of whom are illiterate, do need advice to avail themselves of the facilities the government provides to help them. In many instances, the local politician fills this role as part of his patronage strategy. A few informants emphasized that it did not pay public servants to try and be innovative. One related that when he joined the Civil Service he was just out of college and full of enthusiasm. It was not long before his superior warned him that public servants are not supposed to be innovators. He was given the book of rules and regulations and advised to act accordingly. Cynically, he attributed his present senior position to having followed his superior's advice.

A number of senior career administrators expressed regret that the central government had withdrawn its support from Community Development Projects. They looked upon development as a community-based effort and argued vehemently for the revival of the approach enshrined in these projects. Although, according to them, their implementation had subsequently become too bureaucratised, the original intention of evoking public participation in development was worth giving another try in the context of basic-needs programmes.



Chapter 3

THE POLICIES IN OPERATION: SOME CASE STUDIES

Practice without theory is blind and theory without practice is fruitless.

Stalin

Co-operative Credit

In Karnataka, co-operative credit societies form a three-tier organisation, with the Apex bank at state level, a district co-operative bank and village co-operative societies. The Apex Bank receives financial support, at concessional rates of interest, from the Reserve Bank of India and its loans are guaranteed by the state government. The Apex Bank guarantees loans to the district co-operative banks, which in turn support the village co-operative societies. The government has re-organised the primary credit societies and several Farmers Service Co-operative Societies have been set up which will have personnel trained in agricultural extension.

To help small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, the government provides financing to co-operative societies and commercial banks for various land improvement programmes, including loans for, among others, long- and medium-term projects, small-scale irrigation, purchase of pumpsets and the digging of wells. The government also subsidises loans for various cash crops, sheep rearing, sericulture, crop protection and the purchase of agricultural implements. There are also special programmes to provide institutional credit for Scheduled Tribes, similar to those for small and marginal farmers.

The Primary Land Development Banks, financed by the Karnataka State Co-operative Land Development Bank, extend long term loans for land improvement, digging irrigation wells, building cattle sheds, dairy development, sheep rearing, the purchase of bullock carts and similar operations.

Officials and politicians use the amount of loans, the number of beneficiaries and the rate of recovery as

criteria to evaluate the performance of co-operative institutions. On this basis, the Minister for Co-operation himself has admitted the unsatisfactory record of the land development banks(1). Out of one hundred and seventy primary banks, nearly one hundred were not working and one hundred and seventy million rupees were still to be recovered. Among the defaulters, there were four hundred important personalities, including former members of the State Legislature and even ex-ministers. While ministers urge bank officials to recover loans from even the most powerful defaulters, the bank officials say they are powerless to do so unless the government amends the rules so that the land pledged as security can be auctioned within one month of the issue of the notice regarding the overdue debt. Action to improve performance is, obviously, limited by immediate politic considerations. All that the government feels it can do is to abolish periodically the penal interests on the overdue sums, hoping that this will encourage repayment.

While the performance of the land development banks is unsatisfactory, the officials in charge of co-operative societies claim that these local institutions function adequately. According to the Registrar General of Co-operative Societies, the recovery percentage for the State as a whole was 31.5 per cent for the year ending March, 1979, which is far above the prescribed twenty per cent limit of the Reserve Bank of India. Only twenty million rupees out of a working capital of twelve billion remained to be recovered. And almost fifty-five per cent of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers enrolled as members of the Small Farmers Development Agency and of the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Programmes had benefitted from various schemes of institutional credit(2). Therefore, the Registrar General thought that co-operative societies have done fairly well and provide an excellent organisation for rural credit. They only lack funds. He admitted that it had not been possible to meet all the credit requirements in the State. According to him, commercial banks, which are reluctant to operate in rural areas, should be made to divert their funds to co-operative societies. He also suggested that provision for credit should be coupled to provisions for better marketing facilities to provide incentives to use loans for productive purposes.

Others, working in the Department of Co-operation, did not share all his optimism but broadly agreed with him. According to them, politics prevents an even better performance. Some of the junior officials reported, for

1. Prajvani, 26th September, 1978.

2. Annual Report, 1978-79, Rural Development and Co-operative Department, Part II, Annex "C", p. 42.

instance, that politicians have even been able to flaunt the rule which excludes defaulters from sitting on the Board of Directors of the Apex Bank.

In general, the richer sectors of the population benefit more than the poor. Where commercial crops are grown and there are coffee plantations, co-operatives sell fertilisers, which are in great demand, and make profits. But for a small or marginal farmer to get assistance under the SFDA or MFAL programmes(3), he has to be listed as such with the Block Development Officer(4), which requires the presentation of his land records and of the documents showing his rights as a cultivator.

In theory, any small or marginal farmer or landless labourer can get himself registered in the appropriate category, but in practice, it is very difficult. Many are illiterate and do not understand fully the procedures involved. Even for the educated, obtaining the required documents is expensive.

Villagers openly talk of the money they have had to pay to the Village Accountant to get each of the documents required, for instance, to mortgage land to get credit. To get all these records may require many visits to various government offices with the corresponding delays and expenses.

In the case of loans for sheep rearing, for agricultural implements or for providing milch cattle with feed during the non-productive periods, the necessary documents may often cost more than the amount of the loan.

Those who plant a hybrid variety of mulberry require a certificate from the Taluk Sericulture Inspector stating that his office has authorised him to plant the improved variety. Later the inspector must certify that he has visited the plot and found planting satisfactory. Only then will the Block Development Officer recommend to the Project Director in charge of SFDA and MFAL programmes to sanction the subsidy. It is difficult to get the inspector to visit the plot. Here, again, lower-level bribery is often the only way to get the officer's signature on the application form. In Magadi taluk, the region where the second part of the present report is focussed, consumption loans were totally unknown. Nobody had approached a co-operative society for a consumption loan. One of the members of the Taluk

3. Small Farmers Development Agency or Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers programmes.

4. The block is equivalent to the taluk (sub-district).

Board stated that to obtain a consumption loan, a land-owner has to offer guarantees and that, in any case, very few have heard about it.

A popular loan in Magadi Taluk is the one in which the amount borrowed is used to buy sheep. A member of the Taluk Board said that he had got sheep loans for several people in his village, but a circular was received one day saying that the loan had been temporarily suspended. According to a secretary of a primary credit society, the sheep loan had been a failure. The sheep were sold or died, and recovery of the instalments had been extremely slow.

To get a loan from a primary co-operative credit society, particularly under the special programmes, a small or marginal farmer or a landless labourer needs the protection and help of politically important people in the area. When he hears about such a programme and approaches the concerned agencies, he is likely to be told by the bureaucrats that the programme does not exist or that he has to produce documents which would mean expensive and time-consuming trips to Magadi. The Village-Level Workers may help him to get the application forms, to fill them in and to expedite the process. But they take money for the "expenses" incurred. Members of the Taluk Board are aware that bribes are frequent. But, according to them, the Block Development Officer can do little to change this situation, since he has to sign so many documents that he has to depend on his subordinates at least as much as they depend on him.

Influential politicians may help their clients through this maze. For instance, a Taluk Board member regularly gets circulars informing him about the various programmes. Moreover, the officials at the taluk level depend on him for favours. As the Block Development Officer said, a powerful politician can ask for files and get people transferred. He also mediates discreetly between government offices and beneficiaries to build up his political base. With the increase in red tape, this mediator role has grown in importance.

Politicians regard themselves as "social workers". They must visit Magadi so frequently for their "social work" that many of them virtually become absentee landowners(5).

5. One of them reportedly said that politics had become such a passion with him, and he had to spend so much on cultivating people instead of land, that from having been a money lender, he had come to borrowing from others to the tune of nearly thirty thousand rupees.

Political influence includes protection from governmental action. A public clerk in Magadi, in charge of collecting loans from defaulters of co-operative credit societies, narrated his woes and the tightrope he quite often has to walk. Taking legal proceedings against defaulters is for him a highly unpleasant duty. Not only do the villagers treat him like a pariah but often, when he is supposed to impound the property of a particular defaulter, he is prevented from doing so by the local party boss. He cannot tread on big bosses' toes lest he be transferred to a backward area, which would disrupt his family life, adversely affect his children's education and involve countless other hardships.

An encounter in the office of the Registrar General of Co-operative Societies illustrates the influence wielded by local political bosses. As Dr. Panini was interviewing an Assistant Registrar, an influential politician walked in. The Assistant Registrar introduced him and, after the politician had left, explained that he was a very important Okkaliga leader in a nearby taluk who was now in the Janata Party. The politician had come to see a man who was being operated upon that morning for intestinal cancer. He thanked the Assistant Registrar for his help in getting the operation performed on the auspicious day and time the patient had requested. The Assistant Registrar had arranged this by talking to his elder brother - the surgeon in the hospital. The politician also mentioned that the secretary of the primary co-operative credit society in his village had been given transfer orders, much against his liking. He had been informed that the final orders had already been issued so that nothing could be done to stop the transfer. The Assistant Registrar replied that the Registrar General had not yet signed the order. If the politician met the Registrar General straight away and told him that he had found the particular secretary to be efficient and that their society wanted to retain him, the problem could still be arranged. The Assistant Registrar spoke to the Registrar General over the phone and then took the politician to meet his boss, thus providing a textbook example of the relationships between politicians, administrators and the public.

Rural Housing

The Karnataka Government has launched a big drive to build houses for the homeless, particularly in rural areas. According to available statistics(6), the estimated number of households in the State in 1973-74 was around 4,900,000, nearly 3,700,000 in rural areas. The

6. K.C. Reddy, "Technical Aspects of Janata Housing", a paper presented at Karnataka State Council of Science and Technology held at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, on 21st and 22nd May, 1979.

Karnataka Government started in 1972-73 a house-site distribution programme. About 864,000 families were found eligible, being landless and with an annual income of two thousand rupees or less. Between 1974-78 more than half-a-million families were given sites(7). In 1973-74, as a follow-up of this programme, the Janata (People) Housing Programme was launched, designed to benefit nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, scheduled castes and tribes, minorities, ex-servicemen, serving defence personnel, groups suffering for political reasons and other backward classes and groups. Each family would be provided with a dwelling unit costing twenty-five hundred rupees(8), through a governmental subsidy of one thousand rupees and a loan of the same amount to be paid back in twenty years in equal monthly instalments. The balance of five hundred rupees, either in cash or in labour, is to be the contribution of the beneficiary towards the cost of the house. 30,584 houses have been approved in Bangalore, of which 28,083 had been completed up to the end of May 1979(9).

According to several officials, the programme has been a great success. The Divisional Commissioner in Bangalore stated that the people are so grateful that when he goes to inaugurate the programmes in the villages, he is treated as a maharaja, as if he himself had personally allocated the houses. And, according to him, since the programme mixed people of different castes and communities, the foundation for a new social order has been laid.

Studies on this programme have recently become available. In one of them it was established that the design of the houses provide only the minimum living requirements for a family(10). In another, it has been argued that even to provide these minimum requirements, the actual cost of a Janata house exceeds the amount of two thousand five hundred rupees by between one hundred and fifty and six hundred rupees(11). According to this calculation, the poorest find even the personal contribution of five hundred rupees too heavy to bear, so that only the relatively better-off of the poorer sections are in a position to benefit from the programme.

The People's Housing Programme works in such a way that the Taluk Board and the Block Development Officer

7. Karnataka Draft Five-Year Plan 1978-83, p. 1128.

8. Recently the cost has been raised to Rs.4,000.

9. Report on the People's Housing Scheme by the office of the Divisional Commissioner, Bangalore Division.

10. K.C. Reddy, op. cit.

11. K. Jarraj, "People's Housing Scheme in Karnataka: A Micro Evaluation", paper presented at the KSCST seminar.

(BDO) have a large degree of discretion in distributing the houses. The Divisional Commissioner assigns houses equally to all the districts in his division. Within each district, they are again equally distributed among the taluks by the District Commissioner. At the taluk level, the board determines the distribution of houses to each village. It is claimed that each board member gets a share of the total number of houses available for the taluk. But in actual practice, the share of each depends on his political alignment and on his influence. The same applies to the distribution of sites.

In Magadi, the Taluk Board is dominated by the ruling Party. But two factions have recently emerged. One of these is headed by the President of the Board. Until recently, the allotment of Janata houses went to those villages in which members of the Party were influential. Even amongst the members of the ruling Party, the more powerful could get more houses allotted to the villages of their choice and, if need arose, could get the implementation in other villages delayed, in collusion with the BDO, who has enough discretionary powers to block the programme.

To qualify for a Janata house, one must belong to one of the social categories mentioned above and be houseless. Eligibility is examined by an agricultural assistant and by the BDO. Once the beneficiary is identified, the deed of mortgage is drawn up by the BDO and duly signed by the new owner. He must then build his house on the allotted site, according to specifications, up to the foundation level. This stage covers his personal contribution. Then the foundations are inspected by the Junior Engineer and the construction continues up to roof level. After a new check, the first bill for the amount of one thousand rupees is emitted. This is followed, when the house is almost completed, by a third inspection by the Junior Engineer and the BDO. The bill for the remaining one thousand rupees is signed. Both bills must be presented to the Treasury for collection.

Usually in Magadi Taluk, the BDO's office calls for tenders for the supply of tiles and wood for Janata houses. These materials are distributed to the beneficiaries by the contractor who wins the tender. Occasionally, a beneficiary may engage a contractor to build the complete house.

Bureaucratic delays are considerable, and the laborious procedures put a heavy burden on the BDO and the Junior Engineer. They are seldom in a position to inspect in detail all the houses and must rely heavily on influential Taluk Board members who identify the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries and contractors, in turn, depend on Board members to expedite the payments of bills. When allotting Janata houses, influential members of the Taluk

Board routinely take into account political considerations and allot them to their followers. As one of the members confessed, often people who do not strictly qualify may also benefit. Such cases are tolerated provided they are not so many as to embarrass the BDO. The same Board Member added that it is always politically advantageous to allot a few houses to those who belong to the opposite faction, because factional alignments are fluid and this helps to project the image of being not too partisan a leader. However, his main consideration was that the core members of the opposing faction should not get benefits, at whatever cost. He also stated that if the leader of the opposing faction tried to get such benefits evenly distributed, the informant would of course bring all his influence to bear to sabotage such efforts.

In Magadi Taluk, the factional fight within the ruling Party has often forced one of the factions to seek the support of the Janata Party members on the Taluk Board.

According to one of our informants, an extreme instance of the use of such ad hoc alignments took place in a different taluk (within Karnataka State) in the course of the implementation of the special programme for Scheduled Castes and Tribes(12). One of the Taluk Board members, a representative of a Scheduled Caste who belonged to the faction which, within the ruling Party, is opposed to the Taluk Board President, obtained a contract to supply tiles for Janata houses which were to be assigned to Scheduled Castes beneficiaries. Although he had family ties with a Minister in the State Cabinet, he obtained a favourable vote in the Taluk Board by aligning himself with the members who belonged to the Janata Party. He managed to get his bills passed very rapidly, and worked hand in glove with the BDO, who falsely certified the quality of the supplies. When the tiles were found to be inadequate or faulty, a scandal erupted. But by the time the President of the Taluk Board woke up to it and called a meeting to discuss the matter, the BDO had already been posted to a different office, in Bangalore.

The fact that factional dynamics play a crucial role in allocating houses is also stressed by the leading members of the Janata Party in the taluk. A prominent Janata Party leader of Chakrabhavi village said to us that the people follow the ruling Party politicians like sheep, hoping to receive favours. According to him, in the last panchayat elections, many in his village voted for the Congress (I) nominee because the ruling Party members can distribute rewards in the form of houses, loans and other benefits. People do not realise that

12. In which the subsidy amounts to two thousand instead of one thousand rupees.

they are being cheated. Instead of receiving two thousand rupees, they may actually get only five hundred, the rest being swindled by the contractors in collusion with the BDO. His conclusion was that to educate the poor to fight for their legitimate due is a difficult task.

Land Reform

In Karnataka, land reform legislation has abolished tenancy and reduced ceilings on land holdings. According to the Land Reform Act, the land under tenancy is taken over by the government, which identifies the tenant through the land tribunal and lets him buy full rights over the land.

One of the most frequent criticisms of land reform has centered on the influence of politics in the nomination of the tribunal members. Opposition parties have consistently complained that only ruling Party members are appointed to the tribunals⁽¹³⁾. In response, the Revenue Minister as well as the Chief Minister have given assurances that the opposition parties will also be represented on the tribunals. This assurance has failed to satisfy the critics.

A visit to Magadi town on a day scheduled for a sitting of the tribunal proved highly instructive. People had come with witnesses to argue their case before the tribunal. They had spent considerable amounts on travel and on the sundry expenses of the witnesses they had brought with them. A Scheduled Caste man who had mortgaged part of his land and given the rest on tenancy was asking for his rights, although he had migrated to Bangalore and taken up a job there. He now claimed that his portion of the debt had to be abolished under the Debt Relief Act. He also contested the fact that he had leased his land. The Harijan member of the tribunal (whom he had met) had stated that nothing could be done and that he should let the person who claimed to be the tenant buy his right over the land by paying 2,000 rupees. This, however, was not agreeable to the land-owner, who vented his suspicion that the member had been bought over.

Next, a Muslim came for a settlement before the tribunal. His own uncle, he said, was claiming tenancy rights over his land. On further enquiry, the special officer in charge of land reforms in the taluk stated

13. Prajavani, 24th August, 1978, 8th and 27th September, 1978. In Magadi, all the members of the tribunal are said to belong to the ruling Party (although from opposing factions within it).

that the man had excess land and was attempting to partition it by using the Land Reform Act.

In yet another case, a Rajput tenant complained that his Brahmin landowner, in collusion with the Okkaliga headman of his village, was depriving him of his land. According to him, the headman had bribed the Brahmin to induce him to falsely declare that he was his tenant.

When we met a Taluk Board member who had come there to work, he was with a tenant who had a case before the tribunal. The tenant was pleading with him to talk to one of the members on the tribunal regarding his case, but the Taluk Board member told him to approach the tribunal member on his own. He said that if the tribunal member as much as guessed that the tenant belonged to the Taluk Board member's faction, the case would surely go against him.

The fact that the land tribunals have not benefitted the poor is widely recognised. The members of the tribunal themselves say that the poor have been worst hit. One of them accused the others of accepting bribes. He thought that the regulations which provide representations for scheduled castes and minorities were mere eyewash. The two others who were interviewed also felt that the land reforms have helped the richer peasants and the dominant castes (who had used them to partition and sell land). In their view, the rich are able to extract money illegally from the tenants by threatening to make false declarations regarding tenancy. One of the tribunal members was especially bitter because land reforms had not affected the dominant politicians in the area. He affirmed that one of them had 300 acres registered under a false name. The tenants of such people were too afraid to antagonise them. The tribunal has yet to take up the cases in which land ownership exceeds the legal ceiling.

The officials connected with the land reforms at Bangalore are aware of these shortcomings. However, they defend themselves by saying that this is only part of the process. At least the land reform has not established property rights over land officially recorded in the names of those who are not actually tenants, and the land now is in the hands of actual cultivators which, they said, is a step in the right direction.

Old Age Pension Drive

The State Government has authorised the Tehsildars(14) to visit villages and identify the candidates to the old-age pension programmes. The pensions

14. Administrative heads of the taluks.

are supposed to benefit destitutes above sixty-five years and handicapped persons above sixteen years. Each pensioner gets forty rupees per month for the rest of his life.

We witnessed one of the old-age pension drives in a village. The party consisted of the Taluk Board President, the Tehsildar, the Block Development Officer, a government doctor (to certify the age), the secretary of the local co-operative society and a clerk in the revenue department.

The meeting was to be held at the school. Several people from nearby villages had assembled. But as the group arrived around lunch time, it proceeded directly to the house of one of the members of the Taluk Board, who also belonged to the faction of the Board President. For the occasion, a sheep had been slaughtered to feed the guests. After the meal, the Tehsildar and the Block Development Officer decided to go first to a nearby village to settle the old age pension cases there and then to come back to the village. By the time they came back it was evening and the villagers had been waiting for over 6 hours.

The applicants who had their application forms filled out came before the Board one by one. They were closely questioned about people with whom they lived and other relevant details. Several men were gathered around the table. When questions were asked of the applicants, one of those surrounding the table would volunteer information and in some cases put in a strong word on behalf of the applicant. Many of the applicants had been coached by these men. While in the obvious cases the Block Development Officer decided in favour of the applicants, in other, more doubtful situations, his decisions were based on how strong a plea these men made.

While the meeting was going on, the local village leader who had hosted the visiting officials remained outside. One of his men came from the table and told him that the Board was being very strict. Those gathered around the leader grew apprehensive and asked him to intervene. The leader, however, assured them that he had already spoken to those concerned and that they would do what he said, and he told the applicants to disperse. He later told me that many of those who wanted favours from him were not even 60 years old and that the officials would accommodate him to the extent of around ten per cent. He also said that he would see to it that those in his village who were staunch supporters of his rival would not get favours from the old-age pension drive. He was very proud of the fact that none of the leaders of the opposing faction in the village were anywhere nearby. He wanted to demonstrate to everybody that this was his show and that only he was capable of helping the people.

The Taluk, Core Unit in Basic-Needs Programmes

Our case studies show that in Karnataka the taluk administration, more than any other level within the bureaucracy, determines the success of government policies to eradicate poverty. As a result of planned development in general and of Basic-Needs Programmes in particular, the taluk has assumed strategic importance to enable villagers to get access to government services. Accordingly, the village is no longer the important political unit. On the other hand, political power has been effectively decentralised.

The taluk occupies an area large enough to provide an administrative unit which can house numerous services such as medical facilities, sericulture centres and the like. At the same time, it is small enough to allow for the existence of face-to-face relations between villagers, politicians and civil servants. There seems to exist a triangular relationship between these three social categories. Villagers put their various demands to local politicians. To ensure election or re-election, politicians often vie for support from villagers, which means that the latters' requests are taken seriously, especially about election time.

Politicians act as channels of communication between the administration and the villagers. They get information about the various services the government intends to offer to the rural areas and selectively pass the news on to their respective clients. As we have seen, they also act as intermediaries between the taluk-based civil servants (e.g. the BDO) and the rank-and-file villagers. If, for instance, a Scheduled-Caste landless labourer wants to get credit or a house-site, he knows that the only way he can hope to cut through the cobweb of bureaucratic regulations is to get his local politician to act on his behalf. Taluk-based civil servants are usually eager to accommodate the wishes expressed by local politicians.

Prominent politicians at the taluk level, especially those who belong to the ruling party, act as valves regulating the flow of funds from State government to the poor and the underprivileged. They can block or divert the flow in directions entirely different from the ones intended.

Political rivalry at the taluk level shapes the politicians' attitude towards the poor. They gradually realise that the best way to ensure political support is to do "social work". Those who aspire to political power have to build a political base by intervening in the administration to divert government funds and assistance in favour of their clients.

On the basis of available evidence, it can be argued that much of the funds meant for the poor never reach them and that the taluk-level politicians stand to gain the most, both politically and economically. In the process, the dominant classes manage to survive, if not to get rich. This tends to confirm Rudra's observation that only a structural reorganisation of the Chinese variety can combine growth with social justice(15).

But the Karnataka experiment can also be looked at from another point of view. Given the prevailing social structure, it is not surprising that the rich hold their own. More interesting is the change in the nature of patron-client relationships. The patron has to act as a mediator between the Government and his clients if he wants to build up his political support. The arena for patronage has shifted from the village to the taluk. The intense political rivalry at the taluk level makes it imperative for aspiring politicians to deliver at least some portion of the goods to the poor. What is totally new is that a trickle of the flow meant for the poor is reaching them.

Other positive trends follow from this. Various governmental measures and the manner in which political patrons woo them have made the poor realise that they can get benefits from the government by virtue of their electoral weight. In a country like India, where the rural areas are electorally predominant and where a large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line, political support from the poorest becomes an important consideration for politicians in general and for policy-makers in particular.

15. See Rudra, op. cit.

Part II

THE VIEW FROM BELOW

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Chapter 4

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MICRO-SCENE

"A major weakness of our planning has been the neglect of micro-analysis at the grass-roots level... Lack of detailed analysis of the social and economic microcosms continues to plague the planning process. This has resulted in broad aggregates and generalisations, blurring the human factor and mystifying the effect of our plans on the poorest men, about whom we should be primarily concerned in a country like India."

M.V. Ghorpade

The village of Chakrabhavi was chosen because it is typical of the numerous dry land/poor soil villages in South India, as elsewhere, whose farming depends on scarce and irregular rainfall. Moreover, Chakrabhavi village was selected for study in the 1961 census. This enabled us to compare our 1977 findings with a 1961 base line. We are, however, aware that the data are not always comparable because we often used methods and concepts different from those employed in gathering the earlier data.

The Regional Setting

Magadi is one of the eleven taluks in the District of Bangalore. The town of Magadi lies at about fifty kilometers to the west of Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, and is important because it houses the headquarters of the taluk, with its administrative head, the Teshildar.

The offices of the Block Development Officer (BDO), the Assistant Director of Sericulture, the Sub-Registrar and the taluk civil servants are all located in Magadi, as well as those of the Health and Education Officers and other facilities. The town is also a commercial centre; the annual Tirumala Rangaswami festival held there in

March-April is an important religious event and a cattle fair.

The taluk, with its 913.5 sq. kms, is the second largest in the District. Its population of 172,514 has more than doubled since 1901(1).

There is no forest in Magadi Taluk, only a small area of scrub jungle. The only river of importance flows along a deep ravine, and is of little use for irrigation. The soil is mediocre, depending on scarce and fluctuating rainfall, and is fit only for the cultivation of dry crops such as ragi (millet; eleusine coracana). An important crop is mulberry, and raising silkworm is becoming a profitable subsidiary occupation for a growing number of farmers.

The road network is fairly good; the Bangalore-Mangalore Road passes through Magadi Taluk. Bus communication is well developed, except during the monsoon, when the interior is only reachable on foot or by bullock cart and jeep. There is no railway in the district.

While the population of the taluk has barely doubled between 1901 and 1971, that of its head town has nearly quadrupled, passing from 3,608 to 13,349 inhabitants.

The Village Scene

Chakrabhavi is a large multi-caste village. In 1977 it had a population of 1,348 in 273 households. It is situated at about 15 kms South West of Magadi town, and at sixty-five kms from Bangalore, the State capital. It is linked by 3 kms of dirt road to the main all-weather Magadi-Huliyurdurga road, along which ply buses to Bangalore, Magadi and other urban centres. Buses cannot use the dirt road during the rainy season and the villagers must walk two kms along a footpath to catch buses; but even then it does not take more than three to three-and-a-half hours to get to Bangalore.

Bus transportation is largely nationalised in Karnataka, as in the other States of the Indian Union, but everywhere some minor routes have been temporarily allotted to private owners. In the dry season a private bus goes daily from Bangalore to Chakrabhavi, arriving before noon and bringing not only passengers and goods but newspapers and journals. Some villagers wait at the

1. There are 335 villages in the taluk, of which thirty are deserted. The population of the remaining ones ranges from under two hundred to nine thousand people (see Census of Population, 1971).

bus stand to grab them. Each is shared by many villagers; the few who can read convey the news to the illiterate majority.

Buses are much in use, not only for travel but to transport cocoon trays, sheep, goats and poultry, especially on Friday, the day of the big weekly market which attracts buyers and sellers from a wide area.

The dirt road connecting Chakrabhavi with the Magadi-Huliyurdurga road serves also a few other smaller villages. The improvement of communications between Chakrabhavi and the bigger towns has to some extent reduced its importance as a centre of trade and commerce. Thus, until some eight years ago, a weekly market was held in Chakrabhavi on Thursdays. But today everyone prefers to go to the Magadi Friday market. Even now, however, Chakrabhavi provides a shopping centre for many local and outside villagers, and its teashops serve tea and snacks while acting as gossip centres.

Most villagers own their own houses or huts. The most common type of house has mud walls and an earthen roof. Only a few higher caste landowners have built proper houses with factory made materials.

The houses lack ventilation, and it is usual for man and beasts to live together. However, some houses have small open spaces next to a wall, to which animals can be tethered during the day.

According to the village Land Records, Chakrabhavi has 1,110 acres of land, of which 591 are cultivable, 380 are forest, 59 are barren, and the rest is common pasture land.

Two kilometres from the village, there is a stretch of scrub jungle which only provides fuel and where, among other wild animals, bears live. They are a menace for the cultivation of sugarcane(2).

Each village or group of neighbouring hamlets in Magadi Taluk has a tank which serves the various needs of the villagers, including irrigation. Tanks are rated according to the area they irrigate. The Chakrabhavi tank irrigates 100 acres on which valuable crops like paddy and sugarcane are grown. During the summer, when tanks are almost dry, silt is dug up to fertilize the fields.

2. In 1961, 26 men's livelihood came from growing sugarcane and making and selling jaggery, but frequent raids by bears on the fields of sugarcane have caused a steep decline in cane cultivation.

Besides two shrines to Rama, there are five temples and a mosque in the village. Three are endowed with land, and the priests enjoy the produce. Since temple land comes under the Land Reform Act, the priests have had to register as tenants.

Electricity was introduced in Chakrabhavi in 1969. By 1977, forty-six houses and two shops had electric light and two flour mills and eight pumpsets used electric power.

A post office has been functioning in Chakrabhavi for several decades. It delivered mail once a week when it was started but there is now a daily delivery. It also serves a few neighbouring villages. However, those who want to use the phone or send a telegram have to go to Magadi.

In 1977, there were eight general stores, four cloth stores, two flour mills, seven teashops and two barber shops. There is a certain amount of flux in such enterprises so that it is difficult to state, without first-hand knowledge, how many shops are actually functioning at any given time. However, four (out of eight) general stores, three (out of four) cloth shops, and two flour mills have been in existence for many years and their owners are all well-off.

The local shops are adequate for day-to-day needs. And, as already mentioned, the Friday market in Magadi is extremely popular for both buying and selling grain and livestock. Whenever villagers have heavy or unusual shopping to do, or when they want to sell their cocoons to the government buyers, they go to Magadi or Ramanagara. They go to Channapatna (35 kms) to sell groundnuts, while the more distant market of Tumkur (70 kms) is visited by grocers to sell ragi, groundnut and other produce. Fruit and vegetables are sold in the Bangalore markets.

The village has a primary school. Opened in 1919 with 43 pupils, boys and girls, by 1976 it had 182 students and four teachers. The local middle school was started in 1941 and by 1976 it had 126 students taught by five teachers, all of whom were from outside Chakrabhavi.

Chakrabhavi should have been the natural choice of location for a high-school, in view of its size and the fact that it was already attracting students from a few neighbouring villages. However, the high-school was located in a smaller village because of the intervention of an influential leader from that village who was elected to the State Legislative Assembly and wanted to favour his constituency. The school was started in 1972. In 1977, twenty high school students from Chakrabhavi attended it. Magadi has a Junior College which provides

teaching facilities for the two-year Pre- University course. Those who want higher or technical education have to go to Channapatna (thirty-five kms away) or to Bangalore (sixty-five kms away).

Medical facilities in the village are extremely poor. Villagers have to go to Magadi, which has a primary health centre, a maternity home and several clinics run by doctors qualified in allopathic medicine. The villagers with whom we talked generally considered allopathic medicine more effective than traditional medicine. Only those who could not afford to visit Magadi said they went to a local pandit. It is interesting to note that the villagers want allopathic medicines for themselves while using mainly local folk medicines for the ailments of their cattle. They do not take much advantage of the veterinary centre which, because of political considerations, is located in the same village as the high school.

Two resident midwives attend to all local maternity cases and have contributed to the popularity of family planning (through tubectomy and vasectomy) in the village.

In 1949, an agricultural credit co-operative society was formed for the region, with its headquarters in Chakrabhavi. It started with a capital of nine thousand rupees, in ten rupees-shares. There are 457 shareholders from twenty-one neighbouring villages (147 are from Chakrabhavi). The aim of the society is to advance credit to villagers in time to enable them to grow particular crops, and to facilitate agriculture. Chakrabhavi villagers predominate among the society's members who have received loans(3). The co-operative society has a Board of Directors, nine of whom are elected by the shareholders. Seven of the nine elected Directors are from Chakrabhavi.

In 1976-77 an attempt was made by the government to merge the Chakrabhavi society with that of Belagavadi (a village five kms away), with a new name and with jurisdiction over twelve villages. The government appointed an ad hoc Board of Directors comprising 11 members, of whom the Village-Level Worker and an official from the Bangalore District Co-operative Central Bank, Magadi, were both ex-officio Directors. Because of the obvious advantages in housing a credit co-operative society, the Belagavadi society objected to the merger and filed a writ petition against the order of the government; the Court passed a stay order preventing the merger from

3. Until 1978 the society also functioned as a fair-price depot, selling provisions and sugar at controlled prices as well as fertilizers to farmers.

taking place until the petition was duly heard and decided. Meanwhile, both societies function as before.

In 1962, a co-operative society was formed by 15 Chakrabhavi villagers who wanted to pool their resources to cultivate land. That society vegetated during four years before ceasing to exist due to the lack of co-operative spirit.

The principal concern of most villagers is agriculture, while a small number engage in activities which support it. The main food crop is dry land millet. Paddy, the staple of the better off, higher-caste households, as well as small crops of pulses, are grown in small plots irrigated by tank water. Groundnut, from which edible oil is extracted, is also cultivated. Vegetables are produced in small patches of land with assured water supply.

Agriculture depends almost entirely upon the monsoon, except for small plots irrigated by tanks or pump-sets. The fortunes of villagers are tied up with the monsoon, which varies from year to year(4). As elsewhere in the taluk, the only commercial crop grown in the village is mulberry. Except for the cocoons, which depend on mulberry bushes, the villagers cannot grow on their dry land crops as remunerative as paddy and sugarcane.

Being a large village strategically located, Chakrabhavi offers advantages which are denied to other less fortunate places. The sericulture inspector and one of the officers of the nearby stockmen centre, who works outside the village, both reside in Chakrabhavi. This facilitates the access of the villagers to them and, through them, to important government services.

Chakrabhavi is also the headquarters of a Group Panchayat (Council) which includes five villages, two of which are deserted.

Administrative Organisation

Historically the Teshildar(5) and the Deputy Commissioner were the lynchpins of the administrative system of the State. For development work, however, each district is divided into several blocks, each headed by a Block Development Officer. In Karnataka State, the block is

4. On an average, the village receives annually 76.8 cms. of rain from both the advancing and the retreating monsoons.

5. The administrative head of the taluk.

coterminous with the taluk, but there is a genuine problem in co-ordinating development administration with general administration. The government relies for that co-ordination on its trusted and traditional officials, the teshildar and the Deputy Commissioner. Even now the Deputy Commissioner presides over the District Development Council.

The Village Level Worker is the agent of development in the village, while the Village Accountant has the responsibility for maintaining accurate land records.

Panchayats in Karnataka have very limited resources with which to perform their duties and obligations. They have the power to levy a tax on all houses, house sites and shops, and on the proceeds from the auctioning of the produce of fruit trees such as mango and jack-fruit growing on village land. They receive also a share of the land tax paid by the local landowners. The revenue from all those sources is usually sufficient only to pay for law and order and to arrange village festivals, which are the Panchayats' traditional functions. To fulfil their newly imposed welfare roles, they have to seek outside help. To build a school or hospital, they apply to the Taluk Development Board for financial support. This indicates the degree of dependence of village development on the governmental structure(6).

The Government meets all the expenses of the schools. It only invites contributions from Panchayats when new buildings have to be constructed. The Panchayat also contributes to the free midday meal programme with fuel and some vegetables.

Since 1970, the Panchayat has spent three thousand rupees on road repairs, two thousand on the construction of a primary school, and approved four hundred for additional street lights. All these expenses benefitted Chakrabhavi; only one hundred rupees were contributed towards the electrification of another village. Future plans include the construction of four drains at an estimated cost of five thousand rupees, the sinking of a tube-well and the supply of piped water. These projects too favour exclusively Chakrabhavi.

6. In 1975-76 the Panchayat had an income of Rs. 6535.36; expenditure was Rs. 4466.36, on such items as salaries of staff, rent of office space, paying electricity charges for street lights and replacing spent bulbs, digging wells in other member villages, the celebration of Republic Day, the distribution of free clothes to some Scheduled-Caste members, and contributions towards school construction.

The Panchayat has installed a communal radio in one of the village temples; during 1975, it conducted an adult literacy class; according to the Village Accountant, the response was good. But during our field study the communal radio was rarely in use and no classes were held.

The Chakrabhavi Group Panchayat is predominantly made up of members from the village, eight out of thirteen in the 1978 elections. This election was fought on political party lines, ten members being elected from the Congress (I), and the remaining from the Janata party.

The Changing Village (1961-1977)

In Part I we presented a few case studies illustrating the implementation of some of the legislative measures considered by Karnataka policy-makers as most important in the alleviation of poverty. We shall now attempt to explore the impact of those measures in Chakrabhavi, in order to assess how far they have succeeded in improving the lot of the poor.

Population

As Table 4.1 shows, population in Chakrabhavi has increased from 1911 on, but the rate has changed remarkably through the years. It peaked between 1931 and 1951, and declined steadily from 1951 on. The small (2.27 per cent) increase between 1971 and 1977 is part of a marked tendency to slower growth which has been unchanged from 1951 on. This could be the result of considerable out-migration, but our field data do not provide evidence in this sense, and the increased proportion of males makes high out-migration unlikely. Moreover, the smaller numbers in the youngest age cohort (see table 4.2) definitely point to a decline in fertility which accords with increasing adoption of family planning practices, particularly of a terminal kind (i.e. vasectomy and tubectomy).

According to the Village Survey Monograph Census of India, 1961, only six persons in Chakrabhavi had undergone vasectomy by 1961. To quote from the same source, "Family Planning methods are not completely unknown to the people of this village ... But planned parenthood is not, however, practised on such an extensive scale as to influence visibly the growth of population." (p. 32). But while in 1961 only 2.4 per cent of the households practised family planning, by 1977 - as shown in Table 4.3 - forty out of a total 273 households (i.e., 14.6 per cent) practised some form of family planning. This is likely to be an underestimate, since family planning is a subject villagers do not readily discuss with outsiders. However, neither Brahmins nor Muslims report the practice

Table 4.1.
CHAKRABHAVI POPULATION 1901-1977

S1 No.	Year	Persons	% increase or decrease	Males	Females
1	1901	706	-	356	350
2	1911	643	- 8.92	313	330
3	1921	670	+ 4.20	329	341
4	1931	785	+17.16	384	401
5	1941	896	+14.14	450	446
6	1951	1091	+21.76	574	517
7	1961	1227	+12.47	618	609
8	1961 (village survey)	1234	+13.11	622	612
9	1971	1318(1)	+ 6.80	649	669
10	1977	1348(2)	+ 2.27	684	664

1. 245 households
2. 273 households

Table 4.2.
POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX (1977)

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	86	71	157
5-9	92	91	183
10-14	70	90	160
15-19	71	78	149
20-24	61	44	105
25-29	49	53	102
30-34	39	47	86
35-39	37	38	75
40-44	43	31	74
45-49	30	25	55
50-54	28	31	59
55-59	16	13	29
60 and over	62	52	114
Total	684	664	1348

Table 4.3.

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS PRACTISING FAMILY PLANNING

Caste	Type of Family Planning Measure			
	Tubec-tomy	Vasec-tomy	Others	Total
Lingayat	5	3	-	8
Okkaliga	15	2	1	18
Artisan and Servicing Castes	3	3	1	7
Scheduled Castes	3	2	2	7
Total	26	10	4	40

of family planning. The Brahmins' failure to report is particularly difficult to understand since they are the most educated and urbanised group in the village. Recent demographic changes in Chakrabhavi require further investigation in order to understand fully such rapidly declining rates of population growth, which are unusual for India.

Table 4.4 shows the changing social composition of the village between 1961-77. The Okkaligas, traditionally landowners and cultivators, are the locally dominant caste and constitute 40 per cent of the village population. The Lingayats rose from 13 per cent in 1961 to 17 per cent in 1977, to become the second biggest caste in the village. The two Scheduled Castes, merged together, passed from 13.6 per cent in 1961 to 17 per cent in 1977.

The Brahmins, although only 3.5 per cent of the population, are important not merely because of the position traditionally assigned to them in the caste hierarchy but also because of the land they own, their education and their urban links. Together, Okkaligas, Lingayats and Brahmins form 60 per cent of the village population and own 80 per cent of the available arable land, thus wielding considerable economic power. In addition, by virtue of their numbers, the Okkaligas are politically powerful.

Two groups which have declined from 1961 to 1977 are the Muslims and the Brahmins. Ten of the fifteen Muslim households own land in minuscule quantities (2.6 acres per household). Most Muslims are engaged in trade and commerce and, as a consequence, are more mobile than the Hindus.

In recent years, Brahmins have shown a decreasing dependence on land. As a caste, they are the most

Table 4.4.

SOCIAL (RELIGIOUS AND CASTE) COMPOSITION OF THE VILLAGE - 1961-1977

	House-holds	1961			1977			% of total pop.	
		Population			House-holds				
		T	M	F	T	M	F		
<u>Hindu</u>									
Brahmin (Priests and landowners)	10	56	29	27	4.6	8	47	20	
Lingayat (Priests and landowners)	35	165	80	85	13.0	46	230	121	
Okkalla (Peasants and landowners)	102	504	260	244	41.0	109	542	281	
Sathani (Priests)	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	2	
Artisan and Servicing Castes	41	221	104	117	18.1	47	210	93	
Scheduled Castes (ex-untouchables)	37	166	87	79	13.6	46	230	124	
Muslim	19	118	60	58	9.6	15	85	49	
Christian	1	4	2	2	0.1	1	1	1	
Total	245	1234	622	612	100.0	273	1348	684	
								100.0	

educated in the village, and they have greater access than other villagers to salaried jobs. The younger generation, in particular, shows little desire to remain in the village.

The Lingayats, Okkaligas and the Scheduled Castes have all had increases in population. The first two own land while the third are practically landless, depending almost entirely upon income from labour. Although, as we have stated, the Scheduled Castes enjoy the benefits of protective legislation - reservation of seats in legislatures, scholarships for education, jobs in government etc. - in Chakrabhavi their poverty, illiteracy and dependence for survival upon the landowning castes have prevented them from availing themselves of these special facilities. Without education and technical skills, they are not able to take full advantage of the preferential treatment offered them. In relative terms, only a small number of individuals from the Scheduled Castes have benefitted from education and moved to urban areas.

Land Ownership

Relationships to land and its yields are pivotal to the social system, as is shown by the different traditional caste occupations in Chakrabhavi (Table 4.4) and their differential landholdings (Tables 4.5 and 4.6). We saw in the preceding section that 80 per cent of the arable land in the village is owned by members from the top three castes (Brahmin, Lingayats and Okkaligas). However, castes are not economically homogeneous: there are some poor households in all castes.

These data were collected in 1977 from the villagers themselves. We believe them to be fairly accurate. Utmost care was taken to establish with them a climate of trust, since tactless questioning may sometimes produce evasive answers or wrong information.

Ideally, we would have checked their word against the records of the Village Accountants of the villages where they reported to own land. Unfortunately, Village Accountants do not normally keep written records. They rely mainly on their memory. In order to obtain information, one must be prepared to remunerate them for their time and effort when asking them to write up what they know. Payment may not suffice, should a powerful man be opposed to particular information being recorded. The Accountant of Chakrabhavi, for instance, kept promising that he would draw up lists which he never produced.

It is easier to gather historical data on land ownership than it is to collect accurate statistics. According to knowledgeable elders, Brahmins immigrated to the village several decades ago from the Kolar region.

Though they arrived relatively late on the scene, they were able to buy up a sizeable quantity of cultivable land. Besides the respect they commanded as Brahmins, they were literate, some were even educated and, more important, the crucial office of Village Accountant was hereditary in some Brahmin lineages. Being keepers of land records and scribes, they had an advantage over the others when it came to buying property as it was coming into the market. Moreover, as money-lenders, the land against which they had advanced a loan sometimes became theirs because of the debtors' inability to repay. Since forest and waste land were not in short supply, those who applied to government, requesting permission to bring a stretch of land under cultivation, were usually granted it, especially if the applicants knew the revenue officials. Moreover, the Accountant was invariably host to officials visiting the village. This enabled him to influence them. Sometimes Village Accountants occupied land first, brought it under the plough, and then manipulated the records in their own favour.

It was reported that during the 1930s, Brahmins owned half the total amount of arable land in the village. Subsequently, as they moved to towns seeking education and employment, their links with the land weakened. Properties got divided, and those who moved away sometimes sold theirs to those who remained behind. The high cost of urban living, education, marriage and other ritual expenses, forced others to part with their land. In spite of these changes, those Brahmins who remain in the village still rank as the top per capita landowners. Table 4.5 strikingly indicates that all the land reforms introduced between 1961 and 1977 hardly affected the distribution of land ownership in Chakrabhavi. Only marginal changes have occurred, and they have left untouched the dominance of the three highest castes who were 59 per cent of the population and owned 76 per cent of the land in 1961, while by 1977 the figures were respectively 60 and 80 per cent. The Scheduled Castes show a slight increase in land ownership, but the average size of their holding still remains below half of the village average (Table 4.6).

Competition from modern substitutes for traditional services has adversely affected the position of village artisans. Some, like the Rachevara agricultural labourers and the Thigala gardeners, have emigrated, while others like the barber, the oil presser and the blacksmith have sold some land. The washerman has sold all his landed assets. Although, according to Table 4.7, the proportion of landless households seems to have declined between 1961 and 1977, the situation is the opposite. This results from a change in the definition of landlessness during this period, due to a major event: the abolition of tenancy in 1974. Many of the households included in 1961 in the "landless" category leased land

Table 4.5.

CHAKRABHAVI LAND OWNERSHIP BY CASTE 1961-1977

Caste	1961		1977		Differences in %	
	House-holds	Acres %	House-holds	Acres %	House-holds	Acres
Brahmin	4.0	12.9	3.0	12.8	B - 1	- .1
Lingayat	14.0	12.7	17.0	17.5	B + 3	+4.8
Okkaliga	41.0	50.6	40.0	49.7	E - 1	- .9
Sathani	-	-	0.3	0.8	B + .3	+ .8
Artisan and Servicing Castes	14.0	12.8	15.3	7.9	W + 1.3	-4.9
Agricultural Labour	3.5	0.2	1.7	0.2	E-1.8	=
Scheduled Castes (ex-untouchables)	15.0	7.2	17.0	8.3	W + 2	+1.1
Muslim	8.0	3.6	5.7	2.8	B-2.3	- .8
Christian	0.5	-	-	-		
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
Total No.	245		273			
Total Acres		946.19		919.75		

B = better off

W = worse off

E = equal

Table 4.6.

OWNERSHIP OF LAND BY DIFFERENT CASTES IN 1977

Caste	Traditional Occupation	No. of Households	Number of households owning land		Extent of land owned		Average size of holding per household
			No. of households	%	Acres	%	
Brahmin	Priest & landowner	8	6	75	118.25	12.8	19.7
	Priest & landowner	46	34	74.9	160.50	17.5	4.7
	Peasant & landowner	109*	90	82.6	456.93	49.7	5.1
	Priest	1	1	100	7.21	0.8	7.2
Lingayat	Artisan and Servicing Castes		47	24	51.1	74.60	8.1
	Scheduled Castes (ex-untouchables)		46	35	76.1	76.34	8.1
	Muslims	15	10	66.6	25.90	2.8	2.6
Okkaliya	Christian	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	273	200	73.2	919.75	100	4.6

* One case no response.

owned by others. If they are excluded, the percentage of totally landless households comes down to 20.4 per cent. This compares with the 26.7 per cent in 1977 (with the only exception of a few who had made unauthorised encroachments on village pasture or were sub rosa tenants). Landlessness has increased approximately 30 per cent in sixteen years, reflecting landowners' fears that tenants would be declared owners under the Land Reform Act, 1974. Tenants who did not own land have become landless labourers.

Landlessness is not confined to the lower castes; indeed, as Table 4.5 shows, almost every caste has its landless households.

The proportion of marginal farmers, who own less than two and a half acres, has also increased between 1961 and 1977 (see Table 4.7). Their plight is often no less severe than that of the landless. Households in these two categories account for 56 per cent of the total and represent the poorest section in Chakrabhavi.

Through our interviews, we discovered that a few of our marginal farmers and landless labourers had encroached on the village pasture land and we were led to believe that such encroachments were not infrequent. Since those who had encroached knew that what they had done was illegal, details were not forthcoming. Unfortunately for us, during our field work, the Accountant, presumably acting on orders from above, was cracking down on encroachments(7).

Encroachments on government land must have occurred in several parts of the State and many villagers must have explained to their elected representatives about crackdowns by public officials. The matter went to the Revenue Minister who announced in a speech that the government was thinking of regularising encroachments made by members of the Scheduled Castes. This particular item of news did not escape the attention of the members of the Scheduled Castes in Chakrabhavi, some of whom informed us that they intended to ask the government to give them back the land they had encroached upon.

According to the Village Accountant, only six villagers have benefitted from the abolition of tenancy, and the total amount of land involved is only 7.25 acres. Of the six, two have bought the land but they had to regularise the transfer by declaring

7. Only in one case did a villager state that he had paid a bribe to the Accountant in advance to secure a piece of pasture land. But that Accountant was transferred before he could "deliver", and our informant stated he could not afford to bribe again the new Accountant.

Table 4.7.
LAND OWNERSHIP BY SIZE OF HOLDINGS

Size of holdings (acres)	1961			1977		
	No. of land owners % (164)	No. of house-holds % (245)	Area owned %	No. of land owners % (200)	No. of house-holds % (273)	Area owned %
Landless	-	33.9	-	-	26.7	-
Less than 2.5	38.9	25.7	10.7	40.0	29.3	11.0
2.5 - 5.0	23.8	15.9	15.3	28.5	20.9	20.5
5.0 - 10.0	21.8	14.3	24.5	21.0	15.4	28.6
10.0- above	15.5	10.2	49.5	10.5	7.7	39.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.8.
LANDLESS IN 1977

Caste	Total number of house-holds	Number of landless house-holds	Percent of landless	Percent of landless to the total
Brahmin	8	2	25	2.7
Lingayat	46	12	26.8	16.4
Okkaliga	109	19	17.4	26
Sathani	1		no landless	
Artisan and Servicing Castes	47	23	48.9	31.5
Scheduled Castes	46	11	23.9	15.1
Muslim	15	5	33.3	6.8
Christian	1	1	100	1.4
Total	273	73	26.7	99.7

themselves tenants of the seller. We have no record of the number of tenants who were evicted by owners in anticipation of the reforms.

The records of the land tribunal in Magadi show that villagers from Chakrabhavi have submitted nearly fifty cases. In eight of the disputes the landowners were absentees and it is likely that the tribunal will decide in favour of the tenants. But in the remaining cases, both the landowners and tenants reside in the village, which makes decisions much more difficult.

Some of the disputes relate to temple or monastic land which was cultivated by the priests. Thus eleven Lingayat households laid claim to 5.07 acres of land belonging to one of the local temples, while the manager of the Lingayat monastery claimed the 23.34 acres which were formerly held in the monastery's name. Similarly, the priest of another Chakrabhavi temple has claimed the 6.35 acres belonging to the temple and 3.35 acres of a temple in a nearby village. Tenancy reform has thus put a premium on owner cultivation, which re-emphasizes the importance of legitimate claims to land. Some economists argue that in India "the poverty and employment of the poorest sections of the population would remain practically untouched even if the tenancy and ceiling measures were to be fully implemented."(8)

The changes which took place in Chakrabhavi between 1961 and 1977 illustrate the adverse effect tenancy reforms have had on the underprivileged. The number of households wholly dependent on casual agricultural labour has increased, while that of those who have land to cultivate but must work in addition as agricultural labourers increased in even larger proportions. This trend emphasizes how the poor are being forced to diversify their economic activities.

Villagers have introduced few changes in their agricultural practices and still use traditional implements. Therefore, the poorest households, on their tiny plots, only manage to produce six to nine months' subsistence crops. In order to survive, they must seek other sources of livelihood. Mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing represents one such new opportunity. Sericulture is becoming increasingly popular.

Sericulture

Villagers raise three to four mulberry crops on small plots and this gives them much needed ready cash. The more enterprising growers then graduate to silkworm

8. Rudra, op. cit. p. 30.

rearing which calls for greater skill, care and capital, and involves some risk. But there is no doubt that it is a far more profitable activity than just growing mulberry, even if one out of four cocoon crops fails.

The Karnataka Government has declared both Magadi and Ramanagara Taluks protected areas for raising the "Mysore Strain" of cocoons and has taken steps to encourage sericulture. It is an offence to raise other strains of cocoons, and an Assistant Director of Sericulture has been appointed for each taluk, with several sericulture inspectors under him. The inspectors advise the villagers on the technical aspects of silkworm rearing. The government also buys at fixed rates most of the cocoons grown by villagers. Only those cocoons which are not bought by the government reach private buyers.

In 1961, eleven households were rearing silkworm, and mulberry was being grown on six acres of village land. In 1977, 128 households (64 per cent of households owning land) were growing mulberry and 30 per cent of them also raised silkworm. The area under mulberry had increased to 55 acres. The steep rise in the popularity of sericulture (Table 4.9) demonstrates the versatility of the villagers, especially of the poorer sections, and explodes the myth of a conservative, unchanging rural Indian society. Villagers adopt changes whenever they offer advantages.

Credit Availability in Practice

Indebtedness in rural India is known to be widespread, but villagers are extremely secretive about their financial transactions. Creditors have even more cause than debtors to be secretive; they are afraid that the interest rates they charge and the amount of their assets might invite unwelcome attention from government officials.

The passing of a Debt Relief Act during the Emergency imposed a moratorium on rural indebtedness up to a particular amount, and made it even more difficult to collect accurate information.

The cases described in the next chapter make it abundantly clear that the poorer sections of the village, marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and members of the servicing and artisan castes need to raise varying sums of cash at short notice to meet emergencies such as medical expenses, the replacement of bullocks, the marriage of a daughter, sister or son, etc. On all such occasions they usually go to a patron, generally a rich landowner from a high caste.

Table 4.9.

SERICULTURE

Caste	No. of households	No. of households growing mulberry only	No. of households growing mulberry and rearing silkworms	Rearing silkworms only	Extent of land under mulberry	
					Minimum (in acres)	Maximum (in acres)
Brahmins	5	5	-	-	0.5	1.
Lingayat	23	16	7	-	0.08	1.
Okkaliya	63	43	20	-	0.05	2.
Artisan and Ser-vicing Castes	13	8	5	-	0.05	0.
Muslim	4	4	-	-	0.15	0.
Scheduled Castes	21	14	6	1	0.24	1.
Total	129	90	38	1	0.05	2.

Official publications list co-operative societies, land mortgage or development banks, the national extension service, commercial and rural banks, and other public and private institutions as agencies dispensing rural credit. In fact, institutional credit has failed to reach the rural poor.

Banks cannot take the risk of extending credit to villagers without demanding security, as stated in the conclusions of a recent meeting of top executives. When a villager borrows money from a bank, he views it differently from the money he borrows from a local patron. The villager loses his credit as well as his 'face' if he does not repay his patron, whereas no such sanctions are attached to bank loans. Besides, patrons can put pressure on debtors through various means in a way banks cannot.

Each of the official credit agencies usually advances loans for specific purposes, against some form of security like land or jewellery. Their procedures are complicated and not available to those without influence.

The Chakrabhavi local Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Society has categorised the different types of loans available to members: crop loans, sheep loans, produce loans and personal loans.

The Secretary of the Society claims that loans are sanctioned within a month of application, depending upon the schedule of meetings of the Board of Directors. In cases of emergency, they are sanctioned, he says, within a week. However, the Secretary's statements need to be taken with a pinch of salt, given the fact that the more important loans, even after obtaining the approval of the Director, have to be approved by the Bangalore District Co-operative Bank Ltd., in Bangalore.

Within the "crop-loan" category, a member may apply for credits to buy fertilizers for raising a crop. The amount authorised depends upon the quantity of land he owns and the size and value of the crop. The loan carries a relatively low interest of 11 per cent and has to be repaid soon after harvest, unless it is renewed. In 1976-77, eleven Chakrabhavi villagers had been given crop loans, and fifteen in the following year. The debtors were predominantly high-caste landowners. One Scheduled Caste member informed us that he received short-term loans from the Co-operative Society.

By asking for a "sheep loan", a member may secure a sum not exceeding one thousand five hundred rupees to be returned within three years. The interest charged is 13 per cent, and defaulters have to pay an additional 2 per cent as penal interest. During 1977-78, sixty-eight villagers applied for sheep loans but the Bangalore

District Co-operative Bank Ltd. turned down all the applications. It had not bothered to inform the Chakrabhavi Society that sheep loans had been suspended.

"Produce loans" are advanced against security of jewellery and other valuables, and carry an interest of 13 per cent. There is no time limit for repayment. "Personal loans" are advanced to meet emergencies at 18 per cent interest and can be repaid even by daily instalments.

Until five or six years ago, the Block Development Office in Magadi used to extend loans to villagers for digging new irrigation wells and to deepen existing ones, for buying bullocks and carts, for crops and for land improvement. But it suddenly stopped such loans and limited its credit action to applicants who wanted to build houses under the Janata Housing Programme. The reasons for the suspension of the other types of loans were not made clear to the villagers.

In 1975, seventy-five villagers received free house sites under the programme we have described above. But some of them left the village, and in several cases persons who already owned houses managed to get sites allotted to their sons. This was deeply resented by the poorest villagers.

Since the sites were allotted, only 12 households have received loans to build houses under the Janata Housing Programme.

Eight of the seventy-five were members of the Scheduled Castes. The other eligible Scheduled-Caste members had received sites 10 years before from the Panchayat. Some of them received 4,000/- rupees each from the government for house construction. The Janata Housing Programme came much later, and under it all those without houses were eligible, and not just members of the Scheduled Castes.

Education

There exists in Karnataka State a Compulsory Primary Education Act, under which all children between the ages of five and fourteen must attend school. However, this Act is not strictly enforced, particularly in rural areas. Among the rural poor, girls help their mothers with their household chores and look after young siblings, while boys tend cattle and sheep or accompany their father to the fields. Until recently, it was usual for boys from very poor households to work as bonded labourers in the houses of rich landowners. Girls still do domestic work to free their mothers to work for wages.

The proportion of illiterates in Chakrabhavi has declined somewhat between 1961 and 1977(9). Yet even in the year of our study, 66 per cent of those above five years of age were illiterate. As could be expected, literacy rates were considerably lower for females than for males (Tables 4.10 and 4.11). This applied to all age groups. One promising feature should be pointed out: the proportion of children attending school rose from 17 per cent in 1961 to 54 per cent in 1977; the respective numbers for boys being twenty-two and sixty-six and for girls thirteen and forty-seven. The sharper increase in school attendance for girls than for boys is particularly impressive in view of the traditional attitudes towards girls' education still held by many villages.

Even though the members of the Scheduled Castes are offered preferential educational facilities, a large proportion are unable to avail themselves of these openings: the opportunity cost of sending children to school is too high -- they cannot afford to forego the income.

The Politics of Caste

The socio-economic position occupied in the caste hierarchy is reflected in the food habits of each of them (Table 4.11). Traditionally, rice is regarded as a more prestigious food than ragi (millet) and cereals, (although millet has a higher nutritional value than rice). Those households who eat rice exclusively are at the top of the status ladder(10). 35 per cent of the households eat rice and millet, while 62 per cent eat only ragi and "inferior" cereals. 50 per cent of the Brahmin households eat rice exclusively, while the others consume both rice and millet. Only one Scheduled Caste household eats both rice and millet; its head being a school teacher who owns a little land. Except for Brahmins, Lingayats, Sathani and a section of the Okkaligas, the rest of the villagers eat non-vegetarian food, although only occasionally, as it is too expensive to be a regular part of the diet.

9. In 1961, census enumerators classified all the children who were studying in the primary classes I to III as illiterate because the test of literacy then applied was the ability to "read or write a simple letter" and those children were incapable of doing that (Village Survey Monograph, Census of India, 1961, 170 p. 31). By contrast, we applied a different test: we considered literate anyone who could read and write a few sentences, and we included all children in school among literates.

10. Only six households occupy that position in Chakrabhavi.

Table 4.10.

EDUCATION LEVELS OF CHAKRABHAVI MALES AND FEMALES (1977)

Age Group	Illiterates		Literates without educational standard		Primary/Basic		Matric/Higher Secondary	
	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %
5 - 9	37	57	-	1	63	43	-	-
10 - 14	28	56	-	-	54	24	18	20
15 - 19	42	77	-	-	15	17	28	3
20 - 24	31	86	-	-	23	7	31	5
25 - 29	46	98	2	-	20	-	26	2
30 - 34	57	89	5	-	23	11	13	-
35 - 39	59	87	-	-	35	10	3	3
40 - 44	52	90	2	-	32	10	9	-
45 - 49	50	92	-	-	37	8	13	-
50 - 54	57	94	3	-	40	6	-	-
55 - 59	45	92	6	-	31	8	12	-
60 and over	68	94	10	2	19	4	3	-
All ages	52	81	2	-	30	15	12	4

Table 4.11.
STAPLE DIET AND FOOD HABITS

Caste	Households taking						Total
	Rice	Ragi + Rice	Ragi	Ragi + Jowar	Ragi + Jowar + Rice		
Brahmins	4	4	-	-	-		8
Lingayat	-	20	24	2	-		46
Okkaliga	-	49	51	7	2		109
Sathani	-	1	-	-	-		1
Madivala	-	1	10	-	-		11
Bajantri	-	4	11	-	-		15
Ganiga	-	1	2	-	-		3
Kumbara	-	1	-	-	-		1
Banajiga	-	-	1	-	-		1
Areaaraju	-	-	2	2	-		4
Karathi	-	-	1	-	-		1
Achari	-	1	1	1	-		3
Bovi	-	2	4	2	-		8
Scheduled Castes							
Right Hand	-	1	13	13	-		27
Left Hand	-	-	9	10	-		19
Muslim	1	11	3	-	-		15
Christian	1	-	-	-	-		1
Total	6	96	132	37	2		273

We discussed in Part I the importance of politics at the local level in determining access to governmental services meant to help the poorest. We now examine in its historical context the operation of pressure groups in Chakrabhavi in what may be seen as the interplay between the politics of caste and the politics of poverty.

The hold of the Brahmins seems to have continued for several decades, in spite of the efforts made by the Lingayats prior to Independence to challenge it. The Lingayats of Chakrabhavi claim to have settled in the distant past; indeed, their local monastery's history goes back three hundred years.

To counteract Brahmin supremacy, the Lingayats began to arbitrate in local disputes, and took particular care to see that the parties to the dispute received greater satisfaction from them than those who went to Brahmin landowners. On festival days, they fed large numbers of villagers from various castes -- mass-feeding is a

meritorious and popular act in rural India. There was a proposal to start a primary school in Chakrabhavi during World War I but it was opposed by the Brahmins. The Lingayats therefore started the school in their monastery. But their efforts to reduce Brahminical power and prestige were not successful. One reason was poverty(11).

Okkaligas, by contrast to the Lingayats, had no monastery of their own which could help them to organise and provide resources. They claimed to be the original village settlers. Although they were the largest single caste group, they exercised negligible influence in village affairs, one of the main reasons being that a large number of them were tied to Brahmins through tenancy and indebtedness.

A radical change in intercaste relations between Okkaligas and Brahmins took place soon after Independence and the introduction of adult franchise. During the 1940s, which saw the power of the Okkaligas increase in the former princely State of Mysore -- now part of Karnataka -- there was acute conflict between them and the Brahmins. This conflict first showed itself in the context of access to education and government jobs, and then gradually spread to many other domains. In Chakrabhavi, for instance, the Brahmins opposed the slaughter of buffaloes at the annual festival of the village goddess. The temple was run by Okkaligas and they were incensed by the opposition of the Brahmins. With their new-found sense of strength, they organised all the local castes to boycott the Brahmins. No-one went to work in Brahmin homes and fields and, for instance, the barber and the washerman refused to perform their customary services for them. The incident humbled the Brahmins, who withdrew from local politics, and it became a watershed in redefining political relations.

The Okkaligas had suddenly emerged as the dominant group, as witnessed by the composition of the Panchayat: out of the thirteen elected members in 1978, ten were Okkaligas. Of the other three, one was a Muslim and the remaining two represented the Scheduled Castes.

Although the Okkaligas still wield considerable power, they have been weakened by the fact that they are divided into rival factions, one supporting the former Member of the Legislative Assembly in a neighbouring village, the other supporting the Janata Party. Division into factions is not confined to the Okkaligas but runs right through the village. As we have already seen, the

11. Only thirty-four out of forty-six Lingayat households owned land and twenty-seven of them had less than five acres, their average being 4.7 acres.

recent Panchayat elections were fought on party lines; as a result, the group supporting Congress (I) came to power in the village. To complicate matters, the region as a whole has elected a Janata candidate, whereas previously it was represented by a Congress (I) candidate. It must be remembered that at the time of the study, the Congress (I) held the majority in the Karnataka House of Assembly.

The Janata leaders in the village argued that Magadi taluk has remained backward because its people always elected candidates from the opposition instead of the ruling party. But in Chakrabhavi itself, at the time of our interviews, the Congress (I) faction was becoming stronger (as shown by the Panchayat elections). It remains to be seen whether this will help the village to have greater access to resources.

Chapter 5

HOW THE MAJORITY SURVIVES: SOME SELECTED PROFILES OF POVERTY

"The most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation, which is the prototypical case of interaction. All other cases are derivatives of it....no other form of social relating can reproduce the plenitude of symptoms of subjectivity emphatically 'close'. All other forms are, in varying degrees, 'remote'".

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman

The eleven profiles included in this chapter illustrate the kind of life the poor live and the kind of choices open to them at different levels of want and deprivation. We did not select our cases on the basis of random sampling, and we do not claim they are representative in a statistical sense. However, we excluded rich and medium households, although it must be remembered that there are different levels of poverty with specific problems at each level.

We selected our cases from the categories of 'small farmer', 'marginal farmer' and 'landless labourer' (see Table 5.1)(1).

Information was obtained by direct interviews with each respondent. Care was taken to ensure privacy. The interviews were deliberately unstructured, so that the respondents would talk freely on matters they thought important or relevant. Only after they had exhausted the topics on which they had wished to express themselves did the interviewer steer the interview towards our specific areas of interest.

1. See Chapter 1 for the definition of these categories.

Table 5.1
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELEVEN SELECTED PROFILES

Caste	Small farmer	Marginal farmer	Landless labourer
Okkaliga	1	1	-
Lingayat	1	1	-
Madivala (Washerman)	-	-	1
Bajantri (Barber)	1	-	-
Ganiga (Oilpresser)	-	1	-
Bovi (Earthworker)	-	-	1
Scheduled Castes:			
a) Right hand	1	1	-
b) Left hand	-	-	1
	4	4	3

Much has been written on the causes of and the remedies for poverty. Less attention has been paid to finding out from the poorest themselves how they manage to survive. There has been too great an emphasis on treating them as a "target group", requiring help, instead of regarding them as active and constantly engaged in the hard struggle of survival.

More than anything else, the following profiles clearly illustrate the great versatility and adaptability displayed by the poorest in their survival strategies.

1. G belongs to the Okkaliga caste. He is approximately thirty years old, illiterate and a marginal farmer. At eighteen, he was married to a girl from a neighbouring village and has three children: a boy aged eight, who lives in the village of his maternal uncle and goes to school there, a three-year-old daughter and a son who is fourteen months old. His wife had a tubectomy after her last child was born.

He owns about 1.20 acres of unirrigated land, of which .90 acre is mortgaged to his aunt for five hundred rupees(2), and expects to inherit another half an acre of ancestral land after his mother's death. He has a pair of bullocks, a few agricultural tools, a wooden plough and two kinds of harrows.

G keeps his family by growing mulberry and raising silkworms, by working as an agricultural labourer and by doing odd jobs out of season, when agricultural work is not available.

2. In effect, G has control over only .30 acre.

The family lives in a small mud house inherited from G's father, which comprises a tiny entrance hall, a small kitchen with a flat mud roof and a room without ventilation nor drainage. As in the other poor houses, the animals occupy part of the main living quarters, although there is an open space where they are tied up during the day. In the kitchen, there are a few aluminium pots and pans and some stainless steel mugs(3).

The only ornaments of G's wife are a gold necklace (with the sacred symbol of marriage as its centre-piece) and earrings, given to her by her father as a wedding present. He considers himself lucky not to have sold her jewellery when he was in dire need of money.

G's paternal grandfather owned nine acres of land and he and his sons were entirely dependent on agriculture. When his household was partitioned, after his death, G's father's share of the ancestral land was only 1.70 acres(4). He leased additional land for cultivation, and by dint of hard work and saving bought an additional three and a half acres, which G had to sell when time came to raise money to marry his sisters. When it came to his own marriage, G was extremely frugal. He was able to have the family hold on to the ancestral heritage of 1.70 acres(5).

G was only ten years old when his father died. After he came of age, there were quarrels between him and his mother over land. The mother insisted on living apart, and she was allotted half an acre for her maintenance. She seems to have pursued a vendetta against him, and even complained to the police (it was the only occasion when he visited a police station). She also prevented him from getting a loan from the local co-operative society of which she was a member. He withdrew from the co-operative and now borrows mostly from kinsmen, friends and neighbours.

Until about ten years ago, besides working on his own land, G was also a sharecropper on other people's land. He first was a tenant of a local Lingayat leader. When the news of the impending land reforms reached the village, his tenancy was terminated. For a while he found other landowners willing to lease him land. As the

3. Aluminium and plastic vessels are replacing earthen ones.

4. G's father had four brothers and four sisters.

5. Half an acre of which, as we said, he expects to inherit from his mother. There is great attachment to ancestral land among villagers, and people hesitate to buy it for fear of getting involved in disputes among heirs. Ancestral land, therefore, rarely leaves the family.

tempo of reforms increased, it not only became more difficult to obtain land on lease but the terms stiffened. Owners wanted to hide the fact that they let their land and nothing was put in writing. There was no guarantee that leases would be renewed each year. When they were, a different plot was assigned by the owner.

This convinced G to turn to silkworm rearing. He and a friend of his learnt at the same time, from a knowledgeable Okkaliga, the appropriate techniques. He planted mulberry on .30 acre of land, and a year later, started rearing silkworms. There were several people in Chakrabhavi who grew mulberry and sold the leaves. But rearing silkworms not only requires capital and skill, but involves an element of risk. He sold two cows to get the money needed to buy a few circular trays, rectangular mounts, and stands of split bamboo(6).

Like a few others in the village, G discovered in sericulture an important source of livelihood. Mulberry is harvested five or six times a year, and even on a small piece of land such as G's, it fetches an income of one hundred rupees per harvest, after deducting expenses(7). A good crop of mulberry requires manure and fertilizers. G uses farm yard manure and larvae waste, as well as 20 kgs of fertilizers from the Magadi Society, for which he pays cash. He gets only four cocoon harvests and usually makes a profit of three hundred and fifty rupees from each.

G sells his cocoons in Magadi (at fifteen kilometers from Chakrabhavi) or, if he does not get a good price there, in Ramanagaram, which is even more distant, but is a bigger centre.

During six months each year, when he is not growing mulberry and rearing silkworms, G works as a labourer, earning about one thousand rupees. It is easy to find work during the agricultural season but not at other times. The rates vary from task to task. During harvest, they are three rupees per day, whereas digging, ploughing and other hard work fetches five rupees per day. Wages sometimes include a free meal, while in other cases labourers take food with them to the field.

G occasionally buys and sells cattle. Recently he

6. The worms feed on mulberry strewn on the circular trays, and are later transferred to rectangular mounts with partitions arranged in concentric circles. The cocoons develop in the partitions.

7. Estimates about the number of times mulberry was harvested in a year and the money fetched at each harvest varied from individual to individual.

bought a cow-buffalo for eight hundred rupees, of which one-fourth was lent to him by a kinsman in Chakrabhavi(8).

Since G's wife has young children to look after, she cannot go out to work for wages, but she frequently helps her husband on his mulberry patch, especially during cocoon rearing.

Though illiterate, G wants his children to be educated. He complains that his first son fell into bad company at the local school. This is why he had to send him to his maternal uncle's village. Even there, the boy is not doing well in school. In line with a regional custom, it is likely that, in the course of time, he will marry his maternal uncle's daughter.

G needs cash to buy all that he cannot grow, except for firewood which, like most villagers, he gathers from the scrub jungle around Chakrabhavi. He does most of his shopping in the village or, when he wants larger quantities of supplies or articles not locally available, in Magadi or Ramanagaram, when he goes there to sell cocoons.

As many other villagers, G goes to Magadi for medical treatment(9). These trips are expensive and force him to borrow each time. Moreover, since his income from labour and cocoons fluctuates, G is in frequent need of short-term loans(10). He is known for his promptitude in repaying his debts and has no difficulty in borrowing. The fact that he belongs to the dominant Okkaliga caste reinforces his credit standing. His total debts amount to nine hundred rupees, of which he has borrowed five hundred rupees himself while the rest is an inherited debt.

However much G would like to buy more land, he cannot afford to. He has encroached on .30 acre of government pasture land(11), and has been cultivating it for some time, which he could not have done without the connivance of the Village Accountant.

8. He has twenty-four agnatic relatives in the village (agnatic relatives are those descended -- by male or female links -- from the same male ancestor).

9. Chakrabhavi has no medical facilities. A doctor who once practised there for a while soon discovered that it was not profitable and moved out.

10. Giving and taking loans on mutual-trust basis is an integral part of the life of the poor in Chakrabhavi.

11. Village pasture land is not "surplus land". Surplus land is land previously owned by individuals in excess of the Land Reform Act ceiling, taken over by the government and subsequently distributed to the landless.

According to G, he does not belong to any of the local factions. When he needs help, he goes to the former MLA, another Okkaliga, who resides in a nearby village and belongs to Congress (I). He also has good relations with the village leaders of the Janata party. At the last Assembly elections he voted Janata, while his wife voted Congress (I). The Janata candidate won, but the deposed Congress (I) MLA continues to wield influence in the region due to his widespread connections and, more important, to the fact that the ruling party at the State level is the Congress (I).

2. C's household includes his wife, son and three daughters. Although he and his wife are illiterate, all his children attend school.

C is a marginal farmer, a Lingayat approximately forty years old. At the age of ten, he began working as a bonded labourer until he was sixteen or seventeen. His employer was also a Lingayat.

He kept a provision store in the village for over four years but had to sell it a year ago to pay accumulated arrears of sales taxes which amounted to three hundred and eighty rupees. Previously, he had borrowed on several occasions to pay taxes; when he finally had to pay back his creditors, he sold his shop to a villager and with the balance bought an acre of land. On it, he grows ragi and other similar crops. He knows that there are new, higher-yielding seeds, but sticks to the local varieties because he believes them to be sturdier and more resistant to climatic hazards. He does not grow mulberry because his land, situated far from the village, makes it difficult for him to control cultivation.

Two years ago he bought a buffalo for three hundred rupees, and sold it three months ago for five hundred. He invested four hundred rupees in a new buffalo, which yields three litres of milk a day. This represents two rupees per day when the buffalo is with milk. He makes a precarious livelihood cultivating his land, selling milk and borrowing from friends and neighbours. Like many others in similar economic difficulties, he is on the lookout for any earning opportunity, but the day is not far off when he will be forced to sell his land again and become a full-time labourer.

C's paternal mother-in-law had eight acres, of which she sold five and left three to C's father, a native of another village in Magadi taluk who had moved to Chakrabhavi to become a member of his wife's household(12).

12. According to a custom fairly widespread in South India, which stipulates that when a man has only one daughter, his son-in-law moves into his house and becomes his son.

After the death of C's father, his property was divided amongst his sons and his wife, each getting an acre.

The mother stayed with C's brother, who has the use of her land(13). C also received a house, which has electricity. C's wife comes from a village 20 kms away from Chakrabhavi. Her relatives are poor and in no position to help the household.

C has to borrow small sums frequently to meet household and other expenses. Neither his kinsfolk nor caste-folk help him and he depends for loans on Okkaliga friends and on other villagers(14).

C has never been a member of a co-operative society. According to him, people only become members to borrow money. He never borrows from government departments because they have rigid, elaborate and time-consuming procedures. Failure to pay on time results in the government's attaching the borrower's property. Private lenders show more understanding, are willing to wait and only take matters to court as a last resort.

C has borrowed twelve hundred rupees from a neighbour against the security of his land. He borrowed another three hundred rupees from the Magadi Vijaya Bank against his wife's gold necklace, her father's wedding gift. C's position is so bad that he needs cash even to harvest his standing crop. For his wife's hair ornament, he got fifty rupees and he is hoping to harvest between eight hundred and one thousand pounds of ragi, worth about three hundred rupees. He buys provisions and clothes on credit from the local shops. According to him, his land yields food for only about five to six months; for the remaining period he depends on loans. He drinks coffee, smokes and needs one rupee a day for his expenses.

Like several others in his position, he had hoped to acquire a house site, but was told that he was not eligible because he already had a house (he complains that several villagers obtained sites even though they already owned houses). He also heard over the radio that the government had decided to distribute village pasture land among landless labourers. He knows, however, that to get such land he would need the help of local officials. The previous Village Accountant promised to help him. C paid him one hundred rupees. Soon after the payment, the Accountant was transferred to another

13. C's father married off his daughters during his lifetime, and this relieved his sons from the responsibility and expense of their weddings.

14. Quite often, the creditor-debtor relationship cuts across caste lines.

village. The new one has expressed his willingness to help, but C has no money left to bribe him. He is considering clearing two acres of pasture land on his own, and starting to cultivate it. He thinks that this would strengthen his claim to legally acquiring the land later. But to do so he would need sixty to seventy rupees, which he does not have. Once more he will need to raise a loan.

C only goes to Magadi when he needs medical help and has not visited Bangalore for several years. He has a broken radio and no money to get it repaired. He has never been to a law court or a police station. Neither he nor his wife practice family planning.

He states that he generally steers clear of local factions. According to him, there are middlemen in the village who mediate in disputes for a fee, but he has never approached any of them because he has no money to give them.

About four years ago, C and a few others asked the Congress (I) leader in the nearby village to help them secure from the government some pasture or waste land. The leader promised that he would try, but C felt that he was not really trying. Annoyed, he voted for the Janata Party at the last Assembly Elections, although up to that time he had voted Congress.

3. K, a Washerman by caste, is about forty-six years old. His household includes his wife, two sons and a daughter. Besides his traditional craft, he works as an agricultural labourer. He lives in a mud house with a hall and a kitchen which he inherited from his father. The wall separating the kitchen from the hall collapsed two years ago and has not yet been repaired.

K's wife has a pair of gold earrings which should be passed on to the oldest daughter-in-law. Another domestic possession is the traditional iron box for ironing clothes.

His case illustrates the disastrous consequences which the sudden decline of traditional activities can have. Until about eight years ago, K's caste occupation was apparently flourishing. He washed clothes for thirty to forty households on the basis of annual payment in grain. Each household gave him one hundred pounds of ragi a year, plus important gifts during festivals, for a total of between three and four thousand pounds of ragi a year. He also used to get small sums from occasional customers. In those days the cost of living was low and his family small. He was able to save enough to add four and a half acres to his inherited single acre of land. He personally cultivated two acres and leased out the rest to an Okkalia tenant. But after 1970, there was a sharp fall in the number of his patrons.

As soap and detergents grew popular among the villagers and as synthetic fibres became a status symbol, there was a decline in the need for his services(15).

He was forced to borrow to meet his day-to-day expenses and other emergencies in his household: his father fell ill, and then came his wife's confinement. The net result was that he lost all his land, and in a short period of time his status plummeted from that of a landowner to that of a wage labourer.

K had a pair of bullocks and a cart which he sold after he lost his land. He has only kept the two donkeys traditionally used by Washermen to carry loads of clothes from their houses to the washing place and back.

At present, hardly ten households employ him. A few continue to pay him in grain, while others pay cash because grain has become too expensive. He cannot demand higher wages for his services, or he will lose even more customers. According to him, the number of Washermen households has increased due to partitions and immigration from outside(16). He only gets eight hundred to one thousand pounds of ragi and a small amount of cash a year.

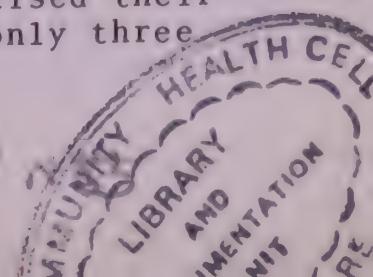
Both K and his son work full-time in their traditional occupation. The father washes the clothes while the son irons them. The ironing box used is a small one so that one of them has to stretch the cloth and hold it while the other works the iron. If the box were bigger, one person could do both operations, thereby releasing the other for full-time work as an agricultural labourer. But K cannot afford to buy a bigger box.

K's wife and daughter work twenty days per month as agricultural labourers for a wage of two rupees per day each. They work only locally, and not in neighbouring villages, probably because they are also needed at home for cooking and other domestic chores. The average income of the household is one hundred and twenty-five rupees, while the average expenditure is about one hundred and thirty-three rupees per month. This gap is met by short-term borrowings; the loans are repaid by working in the creditors' fields.

All but two Washermen households in Chakrabhavi are related to K. He cannot expect help from his relatives

15. This has also happened, to some extent, to the Baker, the Oilman and the Potter.

16. However, our figures tell us that there were eleven households of Washermen in 1961, as well as in 1977. We do not know how many actually practised their traditional occupation in 1961, but in 1977 only three did.



since they are all poor. He generally borrows from his Okkaliga patrons. At present he owes them four hundred and fifty rupees. He took three hundred rupees from a friend, about two years ago, at 15 per cent interest and so far has not paid the interest. The total sum he will now have to return is four hundred rupees. He is also indebted to a Muslim grocer to the tune of fifty rupees. He has not been able to repay these debts and is thinking of pawning his metal vessels, including his huge brass vessel, and even his iron box. K is torn between wanting to pay his debts and wanting to buy the big iron box which would increase his ability to earn. He is convinced that unless he manages to release his son for full-time agricultural labour he will lose the house in which he is living.

K, his wife and daughter, are all illiterate. K's first son passed the seventh standard but his education stopped because there is no high school in Chakrabhavi. His second son is studying in the third standard. K wants to educate him up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate level, but only if the boy gets a government scholarship will he be able to fulfil his ambition.

K believes in the efficacy of Western medicine but cannot afford to go to Magadi for treatment and has no option but to resort to traditional drugs. He also believes in the existence of spirits and attributes the various diseases which afflicted his family to their malevolence. To overcome it, he approached priests and obtained a talisman which he ties round his sick relative's neck or arm. He also visits periodically his lineage deity in another village, in Magadi Taluk.

He also visits Magadi periodically to buy clothes at controlled prices. He obtains most of the things he needs for his daily use on credit, from a Muslim grocer in Chakrabhavi.

He is a follower of the local Janata leaders, and explains that he gained no advantage by supporting the former Congress MLA. He must approach local people frequently for help, and this means close contacts with Janata leaders. But K is convinced that since the party in power in the State is Congress (I), neither he nor the village will receive any benefits during Congress rule.

4. M is a Bovi, approximately thirty-five years old. The members of this caste, found all over South India, specialise in earth and stone work and have the reputation of being able to perform hard manual tasks. But in Chakrabhavi, Bovis have given up their traditional occupation in favour of agriculture and agricultural labour. M is illiterate, but his wife has passed the sixth standard. She has also been trained as a midwife. M wants to educate his children at least up to the Secondary

School Leaving Certificate and expects government help in the form of scholarships.

His household consists of his wife, one son and a daughter. His parents live in the same village but in a separate hut. He works as agricultural labourer and as general "coolie".

M did not inherit anything from his parents. His father was an agricultural labourer and their only property was the small patch of land on which they had built their hut.

M began to work at the age of twelve as a bonded labourer, in the house of the brother of the former member of the Legislative Assembly. He worked there nine years, receiving ten rupees per annum, besides food and clothing. He says he was quite happy; he was well fed and looked after and whenever he fell ill or wanted to visit his father for a feast or a festival, he was allowed to go.

When the time came for him to get married, he realised that he would not be able to support a wife on the money he earned and he started to look for a better job. His patron could not hold him back, since he had not taken a loan during his bonded service.

After he left, M lived with his parents for two years, looking for a permanent job, but he could only find work as a wage labourer along with his father. M's father finally got him married to a girl from Magadi. The marriage expenses came to five hundred rupees which M's father borrowed from local Okkaligas, promising that M would repay the loan by working for them. On the occasion of his marriage, M received from his former employer one hundred rupees. To clear his debt, M had to work without cash wages for some time and it was very difficult for him to look after his wife. He returned as a bonded labourer in his former employer's home while his wife stayed with his parents, and worked as an agricultural labourer till the marriage loan was repaid.

During his second period of service as a bonded labourer, M was paid one hundred rupees per year. He kept twenty for personal expenses and contributed the rest to his father's household. This went on for four or five years till his first child was born. He then left bonded service again to become a full-time agricultural labourer, but was not able to get work for more than six months a year. His wife also worked as an agricultural labourer. Neither of them went out of Chakrabhavi to look for work.

Soon after he separated from his parents, M approached his employer, the brother of the former member

of the Legislative Assembly, for help in constructing a house. The latter obtained for him a site from the Government and gave him fifty rupees towards the cost of building a hut. All the households which regularly employed him as agricultural labourer contributed wood and other building materials, so that he was able to build a small house with mud walls and a thatched roof.

M has few valuable possessions. The only item of jewellery is his wife's gold mangalya (marriage badge and necklace). Since it represents an auspicious symbol of the married state, it cannot be treated merely as a pawnable or saleable item of property.

Finding it difficult to get work as an individual, M became a member of a labour gang in Chakrabhavi. This group was organised by an Okkaliga, and the wages were five rupees per day per man and two per day per woman, although sometimes they were paid in kind. Last year M received about one thousand pounds of ragi while his wife received four hundred pounds.

M's wife works as a midwife in Chakrabhavi and neighbouring villages. She studied midwifery recently, thanks to the intercession of his patron. For each delivery she receives from ten to twenty rupees; she gets more when the child is a boy. And even more when the first-born is a boy, or when a boy is born after a succession of daughters. On an average, she delivers two babies a month; medicines and equipment are supplied by the government.

M's wife is also a family planning canvasser, and for every case she sends to Magadi she gets two rupees; she sends an average of five or six sterilisation clients per month. The average income of the household is one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty rupees per month, while the average expenditure is one hundred and forty rupees. On the whole, M is able to manage except when there is not enough work. When this happens they eat less, and turn to cheap substitutes for regular food, like parched rice and roasted gram.

When M and his wife get enough work, they buy dried fish once a week, but they very rarely eat eggs or mutton because both are expensive.

Like several other villagers, M emphasizes that he does not receive help from his kinsmen or castefolk. One of his relatives, for instance, who is well-off and employs him occasionally, never lends him money. M borrows from Okkaligas and gets credit from local grocers. If he is not able to repay, he works off the loan on the creditor's land. He depends on loans during periods when he has no work and when he needs to buy clothes, or spend on festivals.

Whenever she goes to work in Magadi, M's wife brings back medicine for minor ailments like colds and coughs. She also gets help and advice from the health visitor, or the auxiliary nurse, both of whom visit the village once a week.

M supports Congress (I) because of his sense of obligation to the brother of the former Congress (I) MLA; he believes that he might even get free land should he apply for it, but because he has no plough or bullocks he has not done so.

5. S is a member of the Scheduled Caste belonging to the Madiga, the left hand group. Traditionally, in Karnataka, Scheduled Castes were divided into right and left hand groups, the former regarded as superior. In terms of numbers, access to education, government jobs and political power, the right hand group had an edge over the left one.

S comes from another village and is about 50, his household consists of his wife, five sons and one daughter.

Two of S's sons have had some schooling: the eldest, who is now looking for a permanent job in Bangalore, was first educated locally, then in Magadi and finally in Ankanahalli, a Lingayat monastery. A former member of the Legislative Assembly from the Okkaliga caste helped him to get hostel facilities in Magadi. The boy was able to study at the monastery school at Ankanahalli as a result of a scholarship awarded to him through the influence of a headmaster from a nearby village. Unfortunately, he failed to pass the secondary school leaving certificate examination. Another son, aged ten, is studying in the 7th standard in the local school. The other children are illiterate.

S, his wife and his twenty-year-old son earn their livelihoods by working as labourers. Off season, they dig wells, build houses and do domestic work. Generally, women earn less than men. Jobs are graded on the basis of the effort involved: digging is considered more difficult than harvesting, and accordingly is paid five rupees per day while harvesting is paid three. He told us that between the three of them, they get about 20 days' work a month, and that the household's annual income from casual labour is usually between 2,500 rupees and 3,000 rupees. It is not difficult for S, his wife and son, to obtain wage labour as they are well-known locally and in the region. During the paddy harvest season (December-January), S's son goes to Mandya, where plenty of work is available.

In addition to the three occasional labourers, two sons, fifteen and thirteen years respectively, work as

bonded labourers in the houses of local landowners: the first one has been employed in the house of a rich Okkaliga for six years, on an annual salary of one hundred and seventy rupees exclusive of food, clothes and shelter. The younger boy has been working in the house of an Oilman for several years. He gets the same salary as his elder brother but other conditions are different. According to S, all his children have worked as bonded labourers at one time or other, including the twenty-year-old son who is now a free-lance labourer. Indeed, S thinks that, but for bonded labour, he and his family would not have survived.

Until 10 years ago, S was able to obtain land on lease. But since the introduction of land reform, neither he nor several others in the village have found it possible.

For several years, S also cultivated village pasture land but the Village Accountant made him give it up three years ago. He managed to retain .75 acre to grow horsegram and .15 acre on which his brother-in-law persuaded him about a year ago to start growing mulberry. So far, he has raised two crops, getting fifty rupees net for each. S would like to rear silkworm, but he does not have the use of enough land and is also too poor to afford the equipment. He is planning to find out from the sericulture department if they can help him.

He lives in a single-roomed, Mangalore-tiled house given to him by his father-in-law. He has been granted a site by the government on which he has built a two-room house. The former member of the Legislative Assembly for the region helped him get a loan of 4,000 rupees from the government Housing Board. But after the amount was sanctioned, he had to entertain the clerks to coffee and snacks before he could actually lay his hands on the money. S says that he does not know how he will be able to repay the loan.

S had a cow calf which he sold a year ago to meet household expenses.

His caste is traditionally non-vegetarian, yet meat is rarely eaten in his household because its cost is too high. Traditionally, the Scheduled Castes ate carcass meat, a practice they have given up since Independence.

S's staple diet consists of cooked balls of ragi with a hot chili sauce, three times a day. Rice is regarded as a delicacy and eaten occasionally; sweets are consumed only at festivals. S states that he does not drink liquor, although the general opinion among high castes is that all members of the Scheduled Castes drink regularly.

His father owned five acres of land in the village where he lived. He had to sell them to meet an emergency. He had in addition three acres of land given to him as inam, or gift, by the Government. S was never able to get possession of this land, which has been occupied by some Okkaliga landowners.

S has borrowed six hundred and fifty rupees from a Muslim trader and money-lender in Chakrabhavi. His wife is a member of the co-operative society, but she has never borrowed money from it because her household lacks the necessary security.

He shops locally and buys his provisions every two or three days with his wages. He goes to Magadi only occasionally to get treatment for his ailments, even minor ones; these trips are expensive and he has to raise loans to pay for them. He underwent vasectomy some time ago but was denied the monetary "compensation" which had been promised to all those who got themselves sterilised. S felt that ever since his operation he has not been able to do hard work. He very rarely goes to Bangalore or other big cities.

He has some contact with the former member of the Legislative Assembly for the region, for whom one of his sons used to do odd jobs. He asked him to use his influence to get him some land, but in spite of his assurance that he would help, nothing happened. S concluded that his chances of getting land were very slim. Twenty years ago, he missed an excellent chance to obtain irrigated land which was being distributed in a distant village. He thought at the time that the place was too far away from Magadi, but he later realised that he had been foolish in foregoing that opportunity.

S knows that his poor castefolk could not help him in a crisis. Only members from the higher castes can, because of their wealth and other resources. They have helped him because he has worked for them.

All Madigas in Chakrabhavi support the Congress (I). All have been granted free house sites in the village. S believes that the Holeyas, the right hand Scheduled Caste, support the Janata. In fact, contrary to his perception, different members of the right hand group have been known to support either Congress (I) or the Janata party.

6. D is a member of the Scheduled Caste of Holeyas, the right-hand group. His father moved from another taluk to Chakrabhavi. He is about forty-eight and illiterate. Of his four sons, two work as agricultural labourers, two are at school, while his only daughter dropped out.

He is a "marginal farmer"; he owns about an acre of

land. He began as a bonded labourer, until this type of work was abolished during the Emergency. At the time he left his master, he was getting an annual salary of two hundred rupees exclusive of food and clothes. When he was freed, he heard that Government had allotted forty thousand rupees to the Bangalore District to pay one thousand rupees to each freed labourer so that he should be able to start some new economic activity. On the basis of this information, he met the taluk officials in Magadi through the Village Level Worker. But although he spent about sixty rupees on small bribes, nothing came of his efforts to get hold of the "promised" thousand rupees.

D's eldest son was a bonded labourer for nine years in an Okkaliga household in Chakrabhavi. His starting pay was only seventy rupees per annum plus food and clothes. But at the time of his emancipation, he was getting one hundred and seventy rupees a year.

D rears silkworms and works as an agricultural labourer. Like many other villagers, when he cannot get work on the land, he does the lowest form of labour, "coolie" work. He not only works in Chakrabhavi but also goes to the neighbouring villages. His sons are more adventurous. They go to the rice-growing areas in Mandya at harvest time. Wages there are six pounds of paddy per day plus free meals. After one such short trip, in the previous year, his eldest son brought back one hundred rupees.

D, his wife and his two sons work for wages whenever they can. The total yearly wage intake of the household is earned over four to five months in the year and amounts to three thousand to thirty-five hundred rupees. He also exchanges labour with his castefolk, but not with the higher castes, because they refuse to work on the land of a member of a Scheduled Caste.

Till about a year ago, D was growing mulberry on a small patch of his one acre of land. He sold mulberry leaves to silkworm rearers. With four to five mulberry crops a year, he did not take in more than six to seven hundred rupees per year. But seeing other villagers make money on rearing silkworms, he decided to try it. He increased his mulberry area to half an acre so as not to depend on others for leaves. Each of his four cocoon harvests a year fetches on average about three hundred rupees. Even if one of the harvests fails, he is able to earn about one thousand rupees a year.

As for the equipment needed, he made himself the bamboo stands for resting the trays and bought six trays, as well as mounts, for one hundred and fifty rupees which he borrowed from money lenders.

D cleared and got ready for cultivation one and a

half acres of village pasture, but before he could start cultivating it, the Village Accountant made him give it up. He then heard about a speech of the Revenue Minister saying that members of the Scheduled Castes should not be prevented from clearing revenue land. This raised his hopes. He wonders now whether he should not go ahead and cultivate the land he had cleared.

On the ragi he grows, D can only feed his household during three months per year. The rest of the time he has to buy grain. With his income from wage labour and the sale of cocoons, he is able to meet his basic needs without falling into debt. But this does not mean that he never borrows money. Recently he had to borrow six hundred rupees from members of the local high castes, but hopes to be able to repay this loan from the sale of cocoons.

D smokes regularly and drinks occasionally. He has put up a medium-sized thatched house on a site measuring 30' x 35' in the Scheduled Caste area in Chakrabhavi. The site was granted to him by the government thirty years ago. The house has a hall and a kitchen, but no separate cowshed.

During the recent distribution of sites to the "weaker section" of the population, D was not given one. He felt sore that some others, who already owned houses, were granted new sites while he was not. He thinks that those who obtained them were close to influential men. He also suspects that he was denied this benefit because the influential Chairman of the Panchayat, a Lingayat landowner, dislikes him.

He owns two dry cows which he uses to plough and for other agricultural work and two wooden ploughs, in addition to his sericulture equipment. There are only earthen pots in his kitchen, and his wife has no jewellery.

D has to visit Magadi frequently to sell cocoons, buy fertilizers, and get medical help. Six years ago he underwent a vasectomy.

He is a member of the local co-operative society but so far has never asked for a loan. He regrets that no-one advised him to send his two older sons to school. Now he wants to educate his two younger sons because he believes that education is indispensable to move up in life. One of his younger sons is studying in Bangalore. He was helped by the son of an agnatic kin of D in the village(17) who got him admitted to the eighth standard in school, and was also able to obtain for him a scholarship. This relative is a reporter in the office of the

17. See p. 97, footnote 8.

Inspector General of Police. D had to spend three hundred and fifty rupees, from the sale of cocoons, in this connection. He suspects that part of that sum was spent on bribing officials but he cannot be sure, since the entire matter was handled by his relative.

D states that he gets all the help he needs from the Okkaliga landowner for whom he earlier worked as bonded servant and who is now a leading light of the Janata.

7. B is a Holeya (right-hand, Scheduled Caste) about fifty-five years old. He was born in another district and moved to Chakrabhavi about forty years ago. At present his household comprises his wife, one son and one daughter. Two other sons reside in Bangalore.

B and his wife are both illiterate, but they sent all their sons to school (although not their daughter, who is now fourteen). The eldest son studied up to the seventh standard in Chakrabhavi, and up to the secondary school leaving certificate class in Magadi, where he was able to get accommodation in a hostel run by the Government for boys from the Scheduled Castes(18). After completing his course, the boy went on to study typing and shorthand in Bangalore, where he lived in the house of a relative. He then got a job in Ramanagara and was later transferred to the office of the Inspector General of Police in Bangalore, as reporter.

B's second son also studied up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate class in Chakrabhavi, but stayed on in the village after his studies to work in agriculture and look after the house. The last son was studying in Chakrabhavi when his eldest brother took him to Bangalore and got him admitted to a school and hostel. He is now in the ninth standard and his brother is paying for his expenses and supervising his studies.

B is a small farmer. He owns 3.32 acres of land and a house (including a hall, one room and a kitchen) with a roof made of factory tiles and a cement platform in front of it, where people gather to gossip. B's brother has an identical house next to his. The two brothers, and another man who is a teacher, are the only ones in the Scheduled Caste area to live in what may be called modern houses. They are better off than their Caste folks in the village.

B owns three cows and two calves. As a subsidiary business, he rears and sells goats and sheep. He has an iron plough and two wooden ones.

18. B applied for it directly to the officials concerned. At the time, twelve years ago, there were not many candidates.

B's father was an agricultural labourer when he left the village where he was born. Through a life of consistent, long-lasting hard work and thrift, he succeeded in acquiring six acres of land. After his death, the property was divided and each brother got three acres. B's father had also obtained a site, on which he had built a thatched house. When the property was divided, each brother built his house. B borrowed one thousand rupees from local Okkaliga friends; the additional amount needed for the construction came from the sale of livestock and from his eldest son in Bangalore.

A year ago, B added .32 acre of land to his inheritance. Eight years before, he and his brother had jointly lent thirteen hundred rupees, raised from the sale of sheep and goats, to a Washerman in the village against the security of his land; the Washerman was not able to return the loan and, in compensation, transferred the .32 acre of land to B.

B's son, who lives in Bangalore, in turn compensated B's brother for his share of the amount lent to the Washerman. Apparently, B's brother was satisfied with this settlement.

On three acres, B grows ragi and similar crops. Like most Chakrabhavi farmers, he plants local varieties, because he finds the new higher yielding varieties less resistant to climatic hazards. On a remaining small plot he cultivates mulberry trees. He gets four to five harvests annually and this fetches him between two hundred fifty and three hundred rupees.

His son and daughter do wage labour during at least two to three months in the year, but he himself only works for others on an exchange basis. B gave up raising goats and sheep some time ago, but he is thinking of taking it up again. His son, although he has studied up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate class, has no inhibitions about working as an agricultural labourer or in other manual tasks. B, feeling old age approach, wants him to look after the family land.

B grows enough ragi to feed his household for eight to nine months each year. His other sources of income are the sale of mulberry and milk and the wages earned by his daughter and son. In addition, he gets occasional remittances from his son who lives in Bangalore, which were more regular before the son got married. B has no difficulty in meeting his needs and has no outstanding debts.

Since B owns a house and some land, and is considered relatively well-off, he did not receive one of the free sites which were distributed among the weaker sections of the society.

He is a member of the local co-operative society and has occasionally taken short-term loans. He goes to Magadi for medical care and shopping and visits Bangalore frequently to see his son.

He does not need help these days. Should he, he would go to the higher castes, since his own caste-folk are too poor and too weak to be of assistance. B knows there are factions in the village but does not believe that his caste-folk are involved in factional conflicts. According to him, they voted Congress because they traditionally had always done so, and not for the sake of local leaders. B is cynical about all politicians, both Congress and Janata. He says that they visit the village only when they are seeking votes.

B's case is an example of upward mobility from the lowest position in the caste system. His father began as an agricultural labourer; he himself acquired some land and educated his sons. The son who is working in Bangalore demonstrates the success of education. Seven years ago, he married a girl who also studied up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate. It remains to be seen what this young couple will do for their children when they grow up.

All Scheduled Caste households do not have the opportunities which B had, but it is a promising sign that he, as one of them, was able to achieve a higher position in the socio-economic hierarchy. However, his son had to move to the capital city to achieve the status to which many of his village caste-folk aspire.

8. R is a barber by caste and seventy years old. His household consists of his wife, his grandchild by the first wife of his son, the wife of that grandchild and their daughter. His son lives in Magadi with his second wife and their children. He is a small farmer, with four acres of land.

Barbers occupy a low place in the caste hierarchy, because shaving is considered as polluting. In some areas of South India, barbers also used to perform traditional music, with drum, pipe, and cymbals, on ceremonial occasions. Classical music is a highly appreciated art, but village barbers are not very accomplished in it. R no longer practises either of these traditional occupations, but his eldest son is a full-time musician and a music teacher.

According to R, he gave up barbering seven or eight years ago because in the rural areas of Magadi, this occupation was becoming much less remunerative than it had been when the artisan and servicing castes not only got paid but also received gifts in kind. The system of payment in grain is generally on the decline and has been

abandoned for barbers. Besides, the long-hair fashion reduces the frequency of their services. R also gave up playing music on occasions like weddings and festivals, because it was no longer the group activity that it used to be and he felt that he was not getting enough co-operation from his caste-folk(19).

R inherited two and a half acres of land from his father, and he bought one and a half from a fellow villager about eighteen years ago. One acre of that land was irrigated and particularly valuable. At the time, R was a member of the village Panchayat, and locally influential. He considers that the land he owns is adequate for his household. Indeed, two members of his family are able to cultivate it without difficulty. He had already been practising agriculture as a side occupation before he gave up his traditional occupations. He now works at it full time.

He has two wooden ploughs, two kinds of harrow and an insecticide sprayer. He has inherited a house with mud walls and the traditional flat mud roof. He owns a cow and a cow-buffalo, and he sells milk to about a dozen houses. He does not own any bullocks, but hires them whenever needed for cultivation.

R has a few big brass and copper vessels in his house, and over a period of years he has bought five silver rupees' worth of gold ornaments.

He uses only the local varieties of seeds because he considers improved varieties not to be as hardy. He uses mostly farmyard manure from his animals and buys some from neighbours who have a surplus. He has recently started using nitrate chemical fertilizers. According to him, they yield better results when mixed with farmyard manure. R also uses pesticides, but only when absolutely necessary. The fertilizers and pesticides he uses are bought by his grandson in Magadi.

About ten years ago, when his grandson was very young, he employed an Untouchable as a bonded labourer for 25 rupees per year, food and clothing. His grandson studied up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate class and dropped out to take up agriculture. R consequently stopped employing bonded labour. He only needs to hire labourers for eight to ten weeks a year. But during the peak season it is difficult to find them, and therefore he has to get labourers obligated to him by making them cash advances or by giving them loans when they are in need. Only then can he be certain of getting

19. His musician son is only just able to make a living in Magadi and R sends him some millet every year to supplement his income.

labour when he wants it. Another source of labour for him is exchange labour. His grandson is a member of a gang of exchange labourers and the other members of his household also undertake work on an exchange basis.

R does not sell his grain but consumes it himself. He grows millet on two and a half acres of his land and rice on one and a quarter acres. On the remaining land, he grows mulberry and sells the crop for about one hundred rupees per year. Sometimes he plants horsegram on a small patch. He calculates that his income from agriculture is about one hundred and fifty rupees per month, while his income from milk is about one hundred rupees per month. His average expenditure is about two hundred forty-five rupees per month. He says that he does not have to spend on fuel, fodder and milk. He saves some five to six rupees a month and therefore does not have to borrow for routine expenditures.

R's caste-fellows were too poor to help him when he was in need. R is bitter about Lingayats and Okkaligas. Both of these castes voted against him when he contested the election to the village Panchayat. The only people who helped him in the village were Brahmins. In fact, he is indebted to a Brahmin who lent him one thousand rupees two years ago, at an interest of 20 per cent per annum, and wants to repay at least a part of this amount after selling his mulberry crop.

He plans to buy an acre of land from his uncle, for which he will need two thousand rupees. He is trying to borrow this sum from his Brahmin friends. The interest they charge is high, but on the other hand it is easy to get loans from them.

R was once a member of the local co-operative society. He had a very bad experience twenty-five years ago. He was at the time a member of the village Panchayat and borrowed one thousand rupees from the government. Even then, he had to bribe a junior official to get the loan sanctioned. Later, the government compelled him to repay with interest in several instalments. With the payment of each instalment he had to give five rupees to the clerk. He calculates that in all he spent two hundred rupees to secure a loan of one thousand rupees from the government. Since then, he has avoided borrowing from public organisations.

He went to school up to the fourth standard, but his wife, his daughter-in-law and his daughter are illiterate. His son reached the seventh standard and his grandson got to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate. Had he passed the final examination, R would have liked to take a teachers' training course and become a teacher. He was even prepared to bribe the officials to get him a teacher's job.

Being old, R and his wife are chronically ill. He goes to the government dispensary in Magadi once or twice a month because he cannot afford to pay a private doctor.

R buys his day-to-day requirements from a local Muslim grocer, who gives him credit up to fifty rupees. He only goes to Magadi when he wants to visit the dispensary, buy clothes and fertilizers or visit his son.

He has never been to a court of law and never wants to. He has had some differences with his son but he hopes to settle them through mutual adjustment and without either going to court or involving local leaders.

R bears a grudge against the former representative of the region to the Legislative Assembly because he did not help him to obtain a house-site when the government distributed them free to the members of the "weaker sections" of the village.

9. N, an Okkaliga by caste, almost illiterate and a small farmer, is about forty years old. Okkaligas are non-vegetarians but, as mentioned earlier, there is in Chakrabhavi a vegetarian section comprising sixteen households, all tied by links of agnatic kinship(20), and N is one of them. N's wife is illiterate and their two sons and two daughters refused to go to school.

A year ago, N owned three and a half acres, and then bought one and one third acres for six thousand rupees from his younger brother, who needed the money to set up a shop in the village.

N's main occupation is agriculture, but he also rears silkworms. Previously, he used to buy and sell buffaloes.

He grows ragi and other crops on three acres of his land, enough for ten months in the year, and grows mulberry on half an acre. He used to harvest it four times a year, getting approximately three hundred rupees per crop. For the past year, he has been rearing silkworms. With three crops of cocoons a year, and each crop fetching approximately four hundred rupees, raising silkworms is worthwhile despite the risk involved(21).

N sells his cocoons to the government whenever possible; when not, he sells them in town. It is interesting to note that in spite of his quasi-illiteracy, he was able to obtain and act on the information required

20. See p. 97, footnote 8.

21. At one point, he also leased land but, as we have said, with the introduction of land reforms, this has become practically impossible.

for sericulture. He heard of the availability of government loans to help sericulturalists but was reluctant to apply for them because of the strict conditions governing repayment. He bought a few bamboo trays and mounts and borrowed a few more.

Before, he was an agricultural labourer on an exchange basis. As sericulture is time-consuming, he had to give up agricultural labour for others. When he is not busy with worms and cocoons, he works on his own land. His children look after his cattle.

Until two years ago, N cultivated two acres of government pasture land without authorisation. He then approached officials to regularise the position but claims that they demanded too high a bribe so that he had to vacate the land.

N comes from a relatively well-off household, but his father did not inherit from N's grandfather, who left his three and a half acres of land to another son. His father eventually managed to acquire thirty acres of land but he had seven sons and two daughters and when his property was divided, each son got only a small plot and a house (although they were relieved of the burden of providing for their sisters, who were already married). N got only three and a half acres.

In order to buy land from his youngest brother, N borrowed three thousand rupees from friends, and he expects to repay the debt out of his profit from sericulture. Since inter-personal loans in the village are based on implicit trust, he feels obliged to return the loan as early as possible, and if necessary will mortgage his land to do so.

N is a member of the local co-operative, from which he gets short-term loans for fertilizers and other agricultural supplies. Surprisingly, he buys seeds in the open market and not from the co-operative society.

Since his children are illiterate, they work in agriculture and sericulture. Luckily, N does not have to try to find salaried jobs for them.

He has to go to Magadi for medical treatment, which is expensive, and sometimes he needs to borrow money from a friend.

His wife had a tubectomy, on the advice of the doctor in Magadi, because the couple did not want more children.

N buys fuel, two months' supply of grain, clothes and fertilizers in Magadi. Visits to big cities like Bangalore are very rare.

On the whole, he manages to live on his income. But sometimes he has to borrow for a while from rich locals like K, a Janata leader with whom he is associated and at whose insistence he contested the elections to the village Panchayat, losing by a few votes. N got some help from his faction in his village, but not enough because they had many problems of their own. He got no support from members of the opposite faction. Both Janata and Congress (I) were Okkaligas.

In spite of owning a house, he was able to obtain a free site in his son's name, through the intervention of the Village Level Worker, who is a friend and a caste fellow.

N's is, by and large, a success story. His good record in agriculture and sericulture is due to his capacity to work hard and to be thrifty, and to his ability to adapt to new situations. From being an agricultural labourer on an exchange basis, he took to sericulture. Indeed, on a previous occasion, when the rains failed, he even hired himself out as a bonded labourer for one season to a relative.

10. CR is an Oilman by caste, thirty-six years old. His household consists of his wife, a daughter and a son, twelve and ten years old, respectively.

Neither CR nor his father practised their traditional craft (extracting oil from oilseeds). His main occupation is agriculture. He owns two and a half acres of land in Chakrabhavi and has leased 1.37 acres from two local landowners, a plot of 0.37 acre of wet land from a Brahmin and one acre of dry land from an Okkaliga. Both leases were concluded orally and informally, the first one twelve years ago and the second one two years ago. Sericulture is his secondary occupation and he also works occasionally as agricultural labourer.

He was born in a village of another taluk and started to work at an early age as bonded labourer for an Okkaliga landowner. His father was poor, had a large family and owned only 1.25 acres of land.

His elder sister married a rich Oilman in Chakrabhavi. For several years the couple were childless. When R was ten, he came to Chakrabhavi to live with his sister and her husband. Later, a daughter was born to his sister. In due time the child was married to a rich farmer in a village three kilometres away. The brother-in-law married off CR when he was eighteen and gave him a house, two and a half acres of land, a pair of bullocks and a few pieces of agricultural and household equipment.

Since CR had received these gifts from his brother-in-law, he did not claim his share of his father's inheritance and left it to his brothers.

He lives in a traditional mud house with a front roof covered with locally made tiles. The kitchen and hall are small, and during the day, the animals are tethered in a small nearby open space.

CR has also received a free site. In addition to the pair of bullocks given by his brother-in-law, he owns a cow and a calf. He has four ploughs, one of which is made of iron, and five harrows. He is a good agriculturalist. For his land, he uses mostly organic manure, but for the last six years he has added about fifty kilograms of fertilizers to the twenty carloads of organic manure he uses. He does not buy insecticides but gets a little from his brother-in-law.

He uses only local seeds, although he knows that improved varieties are more productive, because he does not believe that improved varieties have the resistance to the irregularities of the monsoon which the local ones have. He does not grow sufficient quantities of fodder for his needs, and he has to buy some.

Until six years ago, CR reared silkworms but after suffering heavy losses over several crops, he gave it up. His brother-in-law has persuaded him to try again.

Even after he decided to abandon sericulture, CR continued to grow mulberry on half an acre of land and made a profit of one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five rupees per crop. But after he decided to resume rearing silkworms, he calculated that if he bought one hundred to one hundred and fifty rupees' worth of leaves from others, his net profit might be as high as five hundred rupees a year, and this seems to be a very low estimate.

In addition, both CR and his wife work for wages in the village for an average of two months each year. He gets paid five rupees per day and his wife two. He also has labour-exchange relationships with several other households. CR's sister gives him work when he is not occupied. To make sure of getting help during the peak season, CR advances small loans to the labourers whose assistance he will require.

CR generally relies on his brother and his brother-in-law for credit and gets from them small interest-free loans of two to three hundred rupees. He is not a member of the local co-operative society, and he has never taken a loan from the government.

He cultivates ragi on his own land and gets a share of the ragi and of the paddy grown on the two plots he leases.

These grains are sufficient to feed his family during nine to ten months per year. He buys food for the remaining periods, either locally or in Magadi.

CR's monthly income is about two hundred and forty-five rupees.

He and his wife are illiterate but their daughter has studied up to the fourth standard. She dropped out to help her mother, who was frequently ill. Their son is in the fifth standard and CR wants him to continue his studies up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate. If the boy fails to get a scholarship, he will finance his son's education himself.

Since he does not trust traditional medicines, when he gets ill he goes for treatment to the government hospital in Magadi or to a private allopathic doctor.

D, a friend and adviser from whom CR leased land, is a local Congress leader, and a great friend of his brother-in-law. It was thanks to his intervention that CR was able to obtain a free site even though he already owned a house of his own. CR votes Congress (I) on D's advice.

11. BG, a small farmer, is a Lingayat, aged about fifty. His household is large and includes nine members: his wife, four daughters and a son, a widowed mother and a sister separated from her husband.

He owns two acres of inherited land, and has leased 0.13 acre of pasture from a local Okkaliga landowner and 2.13 acres of land from an Okkaliga leader living in another village. These arrangements were strictly informal. BG's relationships with both his landlords are very good.

Agriculture is BG's primary occupation. As subsidiary occupations, he breeds livestock and practises sericulture.

He lives in a traditional mud house with no separate cowshed, which he inherited from his father. There is some open space behind the house, where his cattle are tethered.

BG's father immigrated to Chakrabhavi from a nearby village. He married his cousin on his father's side and became the heir to his in-law's property. He was authoritarian and gave him hard chores to do. When BG was fourteen or fifteen years old, he ran away to Bangalore

and worked in a restaurant for three or four years. He was paid five rupees per month, plus two meals a day, and he slept in the restaurant. While serving there, he met an official of the government sheep farm in Yeshwantapur who helped him to get a job on the farm. It was there that he learnt to look after sheep and to breed them.

He had been working on this farm for 3 years when one day, C, the father of the Chakrabhavi Lingayat leader, visited the farm to buy sheep. He recognised BG -- who is related to twenty Lingayat households in Chakrabhavi, including that of C's son. C persuaded BG to return to the village and obtained his immediate release from his job.

When BG returned home, he found himself once again in conflict with his father. In order to keep him from running away once more, C took him as bonded labourer in his house. He worked there for three years on an annual salary of fifty rupees plus food, clothing and accommodation. When his father died, BG asked to be released from bondage and joined his eldest brother to cultivate the family land.

The brothers worked together for two or three years and then their mother got both of them married. The wedding expenses were met by mortgaging two and a half acres of land to the local Okkaliga leader. After four years, the brothers decided to repay the debt by selling their mother's and wives' jewellery. Six months later, they divided the land, getting two acres each.

BG grows ragi, horsegram and pulses on his land and on the land he leases. The foodgrain he produces covers only nine to ten months of the family's yearly requirements and he has to buy grain for the remaining period.

Like many farmers in the village, BG relies largely on organic fertilizers and only uses a small quantity of chemical fertilizers at the time of sowing. As for pesticides, when he sees his neighbour spray his field, he asks him to spray his as well and pays him for the service. He does not believe that improved seeds are as resistant as the local varieties.

BG started by growing mulberry, to sell leaves, on .63 acre of his land. Then, six to seven years ago, he began raising silkworms, thanks to the help of the sericulture inspector, who encouraged him, presented him with two mounts, and taught him how to proceed.

His initial capital was two hundred rupees, borrowed at 12 per cent interest from a local Brahmin landowner. He repaid his debt by instalments over a period of a year. He gets three crops a year and makes a net profit of about four hundred rupees per crop.

This income covers two to three months' household expenses (when he has no stocks of grain) and in addition pays for yearly clothing needs and for the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of his familiar deity.

BG's elder daughter was married five years ago and he hopes the second one will be married soon. The income he obtained from sericulture facilitated both marriages.

He also took advantage of his training in the rearing of sheep. His wife had brought two sheep from her parents. BG undertook to rear sheep and nanny-goats for other owners on a sharing basis, in addition to caring for his own. When raising sheep for others, he is committed to graze them during the day, to provide fodder for them at night and in payment, when the sheep lamb, he gets one of the lambs - while the mother and the other lambs remain the property of the owner - plus the animals' manure and milk during the rearing period. He has been able to build up a flock of fifteen sheep.

He looks after the sheep and the goats himself. He sells the billy-goats and rams but not the nanny-goats and ewes. He recently sold two rams and bought a piece of jewellery for his wife.

BG has no exchange-labour relationship. He hires labour when he needs to and, according to him, it is not difficult to find labourers even during the peak season.

His sister is chronically ill, and he has spent a large sum going to the government dispensary in Magadi to get her medicines.

Six years ago he borrowed six hundred rupees, interest-free, from his patron N in Hulikatte. This patron, who has always helped him when he needed it, persuaded him to vote for Congress (I).

Two years ago BG borrowed one thousand five hundred rupees from his uncle in Santematur. He has already repaid one-third of this debt. Even though he is a member of the co-operative credit society in Chakrabhavi, BG has never taken a loan.

BG is illiterate, but his son has studied up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

Chapter 6

THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

"The only way to know conditions is to make social investigations, to investigate the conditions of real life... The basic method for knowing conditions is to concentrate on a few cities and villages according to plan...and make a number of thorough investigations. Only thus can we acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge of social problems.

To do this, first direct your eyes downward, do not hold your head high and gaze at the sky. Unless a person is interested in turning his eyes downward and is determined to do so, he will never in his whole life really understand anything."

Mao Tse Tung

The above household profiles show how, in Chakrabhavi, the poor struggle under very difficult conditions to satisfy at least their basic needs. In the following section, we have tried to draw some lessons from their survival strategies.

The Pivotal Role of Agriculture in the Village

Agriculture remains the basic source of livelihood for most villagers, including landless labourers as well as those whose traditional or caste occupation was in the past some non-agricultural activity like washing clothes, barbering or making pots. For small and marginal farmers, crop cultivation is not a simple matter of routine, but requires continuous complex choices. Changing markets for different crops demands alertness and price sensitivity on the part of the growers. The increasing area which even a marginal farmer like D puts under mulberry is an illustration of the desperate efforts of the poorest to improve their lot. Decisions on types and amounts

of crops often involve something akin to walking a tight-rope: if too big a proportion of land is devoted to growing subsistence staples, cash earnings are jeopardised, but if too much is put under cash crops the household is wholly dependent on buying food, which can be risky when markets are uncertain and prices fluctuate.

Even the cultivation of customary crops involves the careful consideration of alternatives. Both G and B obviously gave thought to the new, higher-yielding seeds of ragi, but decided against using them because they consider the local varieties to be sturdier and more resistant to climatic hazards. Under the economic conditions of their households, and on the basis of the available information, this may be the most rational strategy: a marginal farmer cannot afford the risk of complete crop failure, even if avoiding it means losing the chance of higher yields.

The seasonal nature of agriculture, which results in a sharply peaked demand for labour, means that even marginal farmers need additional hands at certain times. Many, therefore, enter into mutual exchange-labour relationships with other farmers. These informal links may well constitute embryonic pressure groups which in time could help these groups to give political expression to their economic needs.

Access to Land

In rural areas, land ownership is an index of economic status. We have seen that land ceiling and tenancy reforms have aimed at redistributing titles to land from the wealthiest to the poorest. Rather than improving the lot of the poorest, the abolition of tenancy has worsened it. G's case is an example of the many situations in which impending tenancy legislation led to the eviction of tenants. The illegality of tenancies does not mean that they have ceased to exist; there are still plenty of cultivation arrangements, unrecorded and informal, which add to the insecurity of the peasants. Irregular tenants are shifted from plot to plot to prevent them from acquiring a permanent association with a particular piece of land. In Chakrabhavi, land ceiling legislation has hardly affected even the biggest holdings.

Encroachment on village pasture land offers a possibility to villagers to extend their cultivation, but it usually requires bribing of the Village Accountant to ensure his connivance. Since the poorest are unable to offer sufficient bribes, their attempts often fail, as happened to C and S while D's case, on the other hand, illustrates the growing awareness among some members of the Scheduled Castes of their constitutional privileges: when D heard the Revenue Minister announce that the

Scheduled Castes should not be disturbed in their occupation of revenue land, he was encouraged to persist in his encroachment, against the Village Accountant's objections

Perpetual Indebtedness

Access to credit is important to most farmers, particularly to the poorest ones. Only the wealthier farmers can readily obtain institutional credit: they usually know the influential officials concerned and can easily offer the necessary securities. By contrast, the poorest lack access and collateral and depend almost exclusively on local, informal loans. They prefer going to traditional money-lenders rather than to have to take the numerous and cumbersome steps required to qualify for institutional credit. However usurious and exploitative the money-lender may be, he is not an outsider; he does not demand security or ask applicants to fill in forbidding forms in triplicate. Moreover, rather than confiscate their land or take them to court on defaulting, he usually accepts payment in the form of labour.

Of the eleven profiles presented, only one poor man was able to get a loan from a bank in Magadi - and that by pledging his wife's jewellery.

Most of the poor are unable to earn enough to provide for their daily needs(1). Consumption credit is thus a necessity for them. Yet this is the most difficult kind of credit to obtain from official sources. Banks, or even Co-operative Credit Societies, are not geared to accepting labour services in lieu of debt repayment. The institutionalisation of such repayment by work might help to get the poor out of the money-lenders' clutches.

Indebtedness among the Chakrabhavi poor indicates how caste cuts across class lines. G and C, the Okkalgiri and Lingayat marginal farmers, have easier access to credit from members of the local high castes to which they belong than have their Scheduled Caste counterparts. The landless low-caste, like M and S, all emphasize that they cannot expect help from their fellow castemen, who are equally poor, and must rely for credit on wealthier high-caste patrons. However, there appears to be a considerable number of households in the village who both borrow and lend money. This is due to their dual position: on the one hand, they are clients of a wealthy patron; on the other, they themselves act as patrons to a few of the poorest families.

1. As in the case of K (p. 101 above).

Bonded Labour

Agricultural labour is seasonal in countless other countries where bonded labour does not exist. Thus, it cannot be its cause, which must be found in the extreme poverty of Indian rural workers, on the one hand, and in a complex of social and cultural traits, on the other.

Although the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act was passed in 1970, according to a recent survey, conducted jointly by the Gandhi Peace Foundation and the National Labour Institute, there are still at least 2.17 million bonded labourers in eight of the Indian States alone(2). The system continues because of its mutual advantages for the parties concerned: the employer gets cheap labour throughout the whole year, while the worker enjoys at least a minimum of security.

The poor are of course aware of the harshness of bonded labour as it existed traditionally, yet many of them explain that but for it, they would not have been able to survive. It enabled even young boys to be employed and to provide an income for their parents instead of being a burden.

The intimate social and economic nexus binding masters and servants in village societies - which the legal ban did not take into account - is such that bonded labour will only disappear when appropriate alternatives are available to the poorest. M's case illustrates this well.

D, on the other hand, who seems to be more politically aware than many of his fellow castemen, believed that "freed" labourers were entitled to a Rs.1,000 rehabilitation grant, but three years later he still had not received this amount. His sons go out to work in the nearby irrigated region, where demand for labour is greater and wages higher. Thus, even in these days, only those who can avail themselves of better opportunities - and they are few - can afford to refuse bonded labour.

The Increasing Politicisation of Patron-Client Relationships

The relationship between labourers and landowners, debtors and creditors, highlights a crucial feature of rural social life and tradition: the tie of patron-client relationship, which binds the poor to the rich and cuts across class and caste.

2. For a description of bonded labour in Southern Karnataka, see McKim Marriott, Village India, University of Chicago Press, 1955 pp. 27-28.

Patrons, by definition, are comfortably off. The bigger the patron, the greater the number of his clients. The biggest patrons come from the dominant castes of Okkaligas and Lingayats and, occasionally, their influence extends to several villages.

Patron-client relationships used to be hereditary. Clients were expected to work for their patron and to give him loyalty, in return for which they not only received credit but also a minimum of social security.

The increase in the importance of the role of government in intra-village affairs, accompanied by universal adult franchise, has changed the nature of patron-client relationships, which are now dominated by political considerations. The competition between local leaders of the opposing parties is reflected in the wooing of their clients.

Patronage and Politics

The electoral section to which Chakrabhavi belongs is presently represented by a member of the Janata Party(3). He is not mentioned as a patron by any of the villagers interviewed and does not seem to fulfil this role, at least in our village. The influential local patrons belonging to the Janata Party are an Okkaliga and a Lingayat landowner. Significantly, the Okkaliga leading member of the Janata Party is an agnatic cousin of the ex-Congress (I) Member of the Legislative Assembly from a neighbouring village.

While many clients are clear about where their allegiance lies, there are some cautious ones who like to sit on the fence. Thus, although S told us that all his fellow castemen voted Congress (I) because they got free house sites through the intervention of their patron, D revealed that his allegiance was to a Janata leader. G, who was a client of the Congress (I) leader in the nearby village, voted for him at the last Assembly elections, but his wife voted Janata.

3. The dates to which the text refers are, obviously, the ones of the interviews in Karnataka and in Chakrabhavi. The gist of the present section is that local politics at the village and taluk level hold their own, even in the face of momentous changes in the central Indian Government. Even during the period in which the Congress Party and its leader, Mrs. Gandhi, lost power in New Delhi, their followers were far from powerless both in the Karnataka State legislature and in the many taluks and countless villages of the state (Editor's note).

When clients think that a local political leader is not doing enough for them, they start to cultivate other patrons. The general rise in the monetisation of the economy, along with the expansion of villagers' networks and their growing awareness of their importance as voters, have weakened the traditional hereditary patron-client relationships. Even the members of the Scheduled Castes, who formerly were all clients of one or the other of the upper-caste patrons, are now aware of the privileges guaranteed them in the Constitution, are developing a growing interest in politics and becoming less dependent on their traditional local patrons.

Indeed, the Chief Minister, addressing the Members of his Legislative Assembly who were supporting him, is reported to have advised:

Nobody need get you votes or recommend your case to the voters. Your only recommendation will be your work among the people. See to it that all welfare measures for the poor are properly implemented, curb the menace of the middlemen, and you will be worshipped as Gods(4).

The poor are slowly coming to realise that they can make claims for government assistance. Those who do not get it compare themselves with their more successful neighbours and apply pressure on their political patrons to procure for them the promised benefits. No longer do they pray with folded hands to their patrons to grant them benefits. They are learning instead to make forceful demands on them.

The new political nature of patron-client relationships has extended the radius of patronage and shifted the seat of political power from the village to the sub-district. As we said before, the taluk headquarters is the place where the strategies of government are converted into action. This level of administration has so far not received from policy-makers the attention that its strategic role deserves. The poor seem to realise fully the rising importance of the taluk administrative services. They also appreciate that only a politically important patron can intervene on their behalf with taluk officials.

On the negative side, the pervasiveness of patron-client relationships in the Karnataka rural scene militates against the development of class consciousness among the rural poor. Vertical linkages hamper the establishment of strong horizontal interest groups. The emancipation of the Scheduled Caste poor is unlikely to

become a reality without their planned exodus to urban areas(5).

Economic Versatility

The profiles gathered in the preceding chapter clearly show that the poorest have to be versatile to survive: any one of their numerous activities alone does not provide sufficient income to meet even their meagre needs. Struggle for survival forces the poor to seek sources of income wherever possible. Poor people are not poor because they lack ambition and drive - an accusation so often levelled at them. Rather, they stay alive because they actively use their ingenuity to meet their minimum needs under conditions in which the odds are heavily weighted against them.

Most agricultural labourers also perform other casual wage work during the off-peak season. Some of our interviewees are also petty traders, while others practice animal husbandry. C, for instance, who is making only a precarious livelihood from his land, acts as a cattle trader and sells buffalo milk. The landless washerman K and his son wash and iron clothes while the rest of his family seek wage labour wherever they can.

While economists tend to regard labour specialisation as the most efficient organisation of collective effort, it should be clear that in circumstances such as the ones we study here, such an ideal is totally unattainable. We may say that, in a very real sense, economic specialisation is a luxury which extremely poor rural workers cannot afford.

In the light of this general principle, the fact that many marginal farmers try to grow mulberry and, if they can raise the necessary capital, to rear silkworms is of particular interest. Sericulture could well become a lucrative venture even for landless households(6).

Presently, the Chakrabhavi poor have to find their way through the bureaucratic maze before they can take up sericulture, and the marketing of cocoons is an additional hurdle. There is no collection arrangement. Growers must take the silk to the nearest town where, if they are fortunate, they sell to a government buyer, instead of having to rely on private traders. The trip to town is in itself costly and time-consuming and the

5. The case of B's son provides support for this proposition (see p. 111, above).

6. There is no reason why those who rear silkworms should not also grow mulberry. But landless peasants would need training, funds and marketing facilities.

uncertainty of the sales arrangements makes sericulture a risky venture.

An active local association could easily come to an agreement with the appropriate government department so as to make it possible for the landless poor to rear silkworms on an increasing scale. World demand for silk exceeds supply. Karnataka State is importing silk yarn from Latin America and elsewhere. There should be a ready market for locally produced silk yarn which provides an ideal opportunity to small and marginal farmers and to landless labourers to improve their incomes.

Attitudes Towards the Bureaucracy

The poor and the underprivileged are changing their attitudes not only towards their political patrons, but also towards officialdom in general. Although they do not fully understand all the procedures of government and feel lost in the bureaucratic maze, they are coming to realise that official decisions may eventually be in their favour. Many have now learned that the bureaucracy can be manipulated if the right officials are approached in the right way.

They also realise the value of written records and documents(7). Those who are illiterate know the extent to which they are handicapped in dealing with government offices and have become increasingly conscious of the importance of education.

Education and Mobility

Most illiterate poor parents have come to regard education as the key to social mobility. Accordingly, they make tremendous efforts to educate their children, particularly their sons(8).

B's son, who is now a reporter in the office of the Inspector General of Police in Bangalore, is the hero of a well-known success story. He appears to have severed all client ties, at least with patrons from his native village, and is now himself a patron, not only for his brother but also for more remote kin such as D's son. He

7. When an official says that a particular service cannot be provided, they do not accept his statement at face value. They wait for the decision to be formally communicated to them in writing.

8. Girls are usually withdrawn from school before or soon after puberty, but boys are encouraged to study at least up to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate level.

helps them to get admission to high school and to obtain the necessary scholarships. His marriage to an educated girl, as well as his job and residence in Bangalore, are evidence of the total change in life style which most impoverished rural Scheduled Caste parents dream of for their sons.

Chapter 7

HOW TO MAKE BASIC NEEDS STRATEGIES MORE EFFECTIVE

"For developing countries, especially the poorer among them, there can be no swift solution, even where governments are keen to make progress in basic needs. Many of the obstacles are social and political."

Robert Cassen

Revolution vs. Reform

Basic-needs strategies are so intricately intermeshed with overall development policies that it is impossible to suggest a single panacea for the problems of poverty which plague the Third World in general and India in particular. It is relatively easy to talk about a radical re-structuring of society as the only solution to poverty. But how can a revolution be initiated by policy-makers? And even if a revolution were to take place in India, it is doubtful whether the benefits would justify the costs. On the other hand, reform measures, though slow, provide the only way for the successful implementation of basic-needs strategies. To those who accuse us of supporting the established order, if not of giving it a new lease of life by making it less obnoxious, we reply that even limited improvements should be welcomed when the chances of introducing structural changes are slim.

Basic needs are unlikely to be satisfied as a result of charitable actions from above. All that policy-makers can do to alleviate the worst evils of poverty is to create the conditions in which the poor can themselves effectively demand improvement in their standard of living. As we have shown, concern for the poor has been growing in India, at least superficially, by virtue of their electoral weight. In a democratic system, where recurring rebellion is institutionalised in the form of periodic elections, the poor have a chance of making their voices heard.

The Karnataka experiment, which tries to combine growth with social justice, is therefore to be looked

upon as a move in the right direction and as the start of a qualitative change which augurs well for the future of the society. As an official commenting on the land reforms in the State put it:

It is true that the poor have been by and large left out. But no longer can one lease out land. All those who own land have to cultivate it themselves. For the first time new records are available, giving details of ownership. It is therefore possible to design further land-reform measures which will be more effective. Whoever may come to power as Chief Minister will be forced to further reduce the ceilings on land.

Some Recommendations

We have shown how difficult it is, even with agrarian reform and the abolition of tenancies, for the poorest to gain access to land. There is just not enough land to provide each rural family with a viable-sized holding. Rudra has calculated, with the help of the latest statistics published by the government, that West Bengal has 3.5 million agricultural labour families (including landless ones), while the estimated upper limit of land that could be obtained from ceilings of 20 acres is only about 1 million acres(1). Conditions are similar in most of India(2). In Karnataka, where owner-cultivation has been the norm, it is obviously even more difficult to redistribute land effectively. Therefore, basic-needs strategies must involve measures which do not require the use of large acreages. Accordingly, we give a brief summary of recommendations for appropriate economic opportunities services and social facilities which, if implemented, are likely to enable the poorest to help themselves. Our recommendations are the direct result of our study and we consider them well within the realm of existing possibilities.

Economic Activities

a) Sericulture

As we have shown, the introduction of sericulture into the Magadi region has been the most hopeful innovation in recent years. Its crucial feature is that it is one of the few development programmes which have really

1. Rudra, op. cit., p. 89.

2. See B.S. Minhas, "Rural Poverty, Land Redistribution and Development Strategy: Facts" in T.N. Srinivas and P.K. Bardhan (Eds.), Poverty and Income Distribution in India, 1974.

benefited the poor(3). The Government of Karnataka was well inspired in developing sericulture and in taking the necessary steps to translate its plans into practice.

The success of the programme indicates that it has great potential for the rural poor, not only in Chakrabhavi but in other areas with a similar ecology. Growing mulberry, rearing silkworm, hand reeling and silk weaving should be made as popular as possible, even if it means that the region will have to import food from outside. Karnataka is one of the leading Indian States in sericulture, but its potential is far from wholly developed. The extension of sericulture to other areas in Karnataka and neighbouring States and its economic and social implications(4) were considered in depth by an expert body. Its conclusions were debated publicly before being accepted and implemented.

In view of the economic importance of sericulture, it should be taught in the schools of this region from an early stage. The educational potential of sericulture is as great as its economic potential. Training in growing mulberry and rearing silkworm ought to be part of school curricula. It can also provide the basis for the teaching of botany, entomology, mycology, bacteriology, soil chemistry and other related disciplines.

The full implications of enabling the poorest to have preferential access to, if not a full monopoly of, sericulture need to be carefully worked out: credit and market facilities will have to be provided, besides the necessary training and advisory services. The scheme could take as its model the introduction of sugarcane in the Mandya region, where farmers received contracts for the production of certain tonnages at prices fixed in advance; they also received cultivation advances as well as regular extension advice. Such arrangements in sericulture would enable the poorest to take up silkworm rearing, as well as spinning yarn and weaving silk cloth.

b) Animal Husbandry

The breeding and trading of animals constitutes another activity which offers considerable scope for marginal farmers as well as landless labourers.

3. And one which the rich are starting to resent because it is beginning to make labour more expensive.

4. Including the need to develop alternative resources to insure against overdependence on a single crop and industry.

c) Crops

The cultivation of high value produce can make even a small or marginal holding an economic proposition. Vegetable or flower growing for urban consumption can provide the small and marginal farmers with a reasonable income, provided they have ready access to credit, extension services and market outlets.

The creation of these new opportunities, however, needs to be accompanied by appropriate service facilities.

Service Facilities

a) Access to Officialdom

The obstacles which the poorest must overcome to accede to the services which the government, ostensibly, provides specifically for them have to be eliminated. Procedures have to be greatly simplified and officials must be more accessible. The setting up of an Ombudsman service, particularly for the poorest sections, would not only help them to find out the aid and services to which they are entitled, but also provide them with channels of appeal against what are often arbitrary bureaucratic decisions.

b) Access to Credit

It may be worth considering whether the existing money-lenders cannot be made better use of. Money-lenders could be registered and norms imposed with regard to maximum interest rates. A suitable mixture of incentives for those who give credit to the poor at low rates and deterrents for those who charge usurious interest might be a more effective way of reaching the rural poor than existing banks and co-operative societies. Money-lenders who comply with government regulations should be encouraged to associate and to start small banks, which could then grow from below instead of being imposed from above. This would dispense with big buildings, expensive furnishings, salaried urban staff and other components of the high overhead costs of centralised credit institutions.

c) Access to Medical Services

Since villagers prefer allopathic to traditional medicine, while only the latter is available in villages, there should be well-equipped medical vans visiting villages regularly from taluk headquarters.

d) Access to Means of Family Planning

As already mentioned, the popularity of family planning among the poor in Chakrabhavi seems exceptional. An in-depth study of this particular aspect could help to throw light on a very important feature of development. One explanation may be that the locally trained family planning official encourages her kin and friends to become acceptors. If this is so, the Chakrabhavi experience has an important lesson to teach other societies, inasmuch as they, too, should try to involve one of the poorest local women as family-planning adviser.

e) Access to Education

Since education is generally regarded as the key to social mobility, much more attention needs to be given to the whole educational structure and not just to the provision of reserved places and scholarships for Scheduled and Backward Castes.

Effective Social Units in Development Programme Design

a) The Household as the Operative Social Unit in Basic Needs Strategies

Any development programme intended to benefit the poorest sectors of society should centre on the household as the most important social unit. Programmes designed for larger units, such as castes, regions or villages, are likely to benefit the rich, frequently at the expense of the poor. Poor households are easy to identify and their members are more likely to work for its own benefit than the members of a larger group. Inter-household competition, which is fairly common, might also contribute to making household-based programmes a success.

b) Caste as a Vehicle of Development

The literature on caste is full of statements about caste as an obstacle to occupational mobility and economic development. The anti-caste and pro-equality rhetoric is so overwhelming that no thought is given to using caste to promote development and equality. It is high time unorthodox remedies be given a trial. In India, for instance, the pig is regarded as a polluted and polluting animal and the Swineherds occupy a very low position in the hierarchy of caste. On the other hand, the vast majority of people are non-vegetarian by tradition and pork consumption is likely to become more popular with increasing urbanisation and Westernisation. Pig-rearing should therefore be seriously and exhaustively analysed. It may be a good idea to offer incentives to members of the twice-born and other castes to raise pigs under

hygienic conditions. If a sufficient number of educated members from the high castes take up pig-rearing, not only will the activity spread but, in the process, both the pig and pork will shed their low status.

Within the same order of ideas, artisan castes could be used to enhance development instead of hampering it. While it is obvious that neither poverty nor lack of opportunities should force anyone into the traditional occupation of his caste, it would be wasteful to lose the valuable knowledge and skills acquired over the centuries. Technical schools could be set up in taluk headquarters to provide training facilities in carpentry, smithery, brick- and tile-making, basketry, mat-weaving, cloth-weaving and other handicrafts. During the last decade or so, there has been much discussion of the need to "vocationalise" education. Vocationalisation should start from the earliest years. It would encourage individuals, and even groups of individuals, to be self-employed instead of applying for non-existent jobs. Given enough thought, training schools can become instruments for the spread of appropriate technology. If, through them, groups of boys and girls from the higher and landed castes would acquire manual skills, this would help to dissociate caste from the practice of a particular traditional occupation and to increase the opportunities of upper social mobility.

Political Awareness and Power Within the Poorest Strata

a) Horizontal vs. Vertical Alignments

In our discussion of patron-client relationships, we pointed out that present socio-political conditions favour vertical linkages between the poor and their patrons, while militating against the formation of pressure groups among the poor themselves. We also argued that a powerful horizontal alignment of the poor is a necessary pre-condition of effective basic-needs strategies. Therefore, wherever some such class alignment exists, it needs to be given every chance to develop so that its voice will be heard and heeded.

Exchange labour represents one of the few existing horizontal groupings among small and marginal farmers. Similarly, labour gangs bring the landless together. If these informal associations were helped to acquire a political connotation, they could well develop into strong and vocal pressure groups.

b) The Importance of Mass Media

The function of the most frequent and widest

possible diffusion, through different mass media(5), of information regarding the new legal norms which benefit the poorest sectors of the population is obvious. Only if those sectors are made aware of their new rights and privileges will they be likely to make the necessary efforts to exercise them fully and effectively.

When devising basic-needs strategies, the many difficulties involved in ensuring that the benefits meant for the poor are actually available to those who need them most should be thoroughly taken into consideration and dealt with, so as to maximise the direct participation of the beneficiaries of the new programmes and to minimise the role of leaders, brokers and other would-be patrons.

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In our examination of the macro and micro social, political and economic scenes in Karnataka and in Chakrabhavi, from the point of view of basic-needs strategies, we have tried to report objectively on the best and worst features of the present development policies, on their promises, failures and drawbacks. We have repeatedly drawn attention to a typical error of these policies, which consists in regarding the poor as target groups for whom things have to be done, instead of actively involving them in the design as well as the execution of basic-needs programmes. The resourcefulness of the poor in their survival strategies is a promising feature of India's development. If they manage to survive under their overwhelmingly difficult circumstances, one cannot but hope that they will be able to improve their own lot as soon as the major obstacles in their path are removed.

5. Especially radio and TV, given the present low literacy level of the Indian masses.

Appendix 1

RESEARCH METHOD FOR PART I

First, we interviewed politicians, Government officials and others who influence the formation of policy. Second, we collected newspaper cuttings dealing with development. Finally, we studied the way some of the specific programmes designed to help the weaker sections of the society are implemented at sub-district and village level.

The first set of interviews was conducted in August and September 1978 by Professor Epstein and Dr. M.N. Panini together. Professor Epstein's earlier books(1) proved a useful introduction to administrators and policy-makers concerned with development. Most of them had read them, as well as those of other foreign social scientists, in striking contrast to their disregard of social and political reality.

We interviewed 15 policy-makers, seven politicians, three of whom are ministers of Cabinet rank, one a Deputy Speaker of the State Assembly, one a prominent member of the Legislative Assembly who is also director of an institute devoted to research on problems of development, a distinguished economist at present on the Planning Board of the State but who was previously a member of the National Planning Commission and for some time a Cabinet Minister in the Central Government. Of the eight officials interviewed, one had been a Professor of Economics in Karnataka. Another had recently left a government job to accept a Vice Chancellorship. We sent a questionnaire to all the members of the Planning Board, as well as to our interviewees, as a cross-check on the data gathered during the course of our field work(2). Only three people responded: the Chief Minister and the

1. T. Scarlett Epstein, Economic Development and Social Change in South India, Manchester University Press 1962, translated into Kannada (1977), republished by Media Promoters and Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1979); and South India: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Macmillan (1973).

2. See Appendix 2 for a copy of the questionnaire used.

two academics interviewed earlier. Our selection of interviewees was based on the sole consideration of their influence in shaping government policies regarding the Minimum Needs Programmes. We are unable to contact members of the opposition personally.

In May and June 1979, Dr. Panini focused on the implementation of the policies for development to explore the socio-political dynamics involved. Officials at various levels of the hierarchy dealing with the Minimum Needs Programme, co-operative credit societies and land reforms were interviewed: senior Government officials like the Adviser, Land Reforms, the Divisional Commissioner, Bangalore Division, and the Registrar General of Co-operative Societies. In addition, all the important officials of Magadi town, the headquarters of Magadi taluk and some village officials were contacted. In all, 20 policy-makers were interviewed (see Chart 1.1).

As Dr. Panini comes from Karnataka, he faced no problems in interviewing(3) or understanding the proceedings of the land tribunal at Magadi, or how Government agencies functioned to put the Minimum Needs Programme and land reforms into effect. He compared their action with the news items concerning development and the Minimum Needs Programme as reported in a prominent Kannada daily called Prajavani.

3. Dr. Panini wishes to thank Mr. G.K. Karanth who has done anthropological fieldwork in some villages of the taluk. Mr. Karanth introduced him to several prominent local politicians and officials and put at his disposal insights gained during intensive fieldwork.

Chart 1.1

INTERVIEWEES' OFFICIAL POSITIONS

- 1) Adviser, Land Reforms
- 2) Chief Minister
- 3) Development Commissioner
- 4) Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District
- 5) Deputy Speaker, Legislative Assembly
- 6) Director, Bureau of Economics and Statistics
- 7) Director, Drought-Prone Areas Programme
- 8) Divisional Commissioner, Bangalore Division
- 9) Member, Board of Planning, Government of Karnataka
- 10) Joint Director, Department of Social Welfare
- 11) Joint Director (Tribal Affairs), Department of Social Welfare
- 12) Member of the Legislative Assembly (Opposition)
- 13) Minister for Agriculture
- 14) Minister for Finance
- 15) Minister for Rural Development
- 16) Minister of Law and Social Welfare
- 17) Registrar General of Co-operative Societies
- 18) Secretary, Department of Agriculture
- 19) Secretary, Planning Department
- 20) Vice-Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore

Appendix 2

BASIC LIVING CONDITIONS IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORKS: A STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FOR KARNATAKA STATE

A BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME:

1) What do you regard as the main obstacles to rural development?

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.....
.....

2) What measures would you suggest to help overcome these obstacles?

.....
.....
.....

3) What do you think should the be respective roles of

a) Government
b) Village Societies

in designing rural development?

.....
.....
.....

Your identity will be treated as confidential. Please take as much space as you want with regard to the answers to the questions. Where you need additional space, please attach sheets. Kindly return the completed questionnaire to Professor T.S. Epstein, c/o. Dr. S. Seshaiyah, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore 560040, as soon as possible, and not later in any case than 15th September, 1978.

4) Do you think the rural power structure needs to be changed to effect rapid rural development? If so, in what manner?
.....
.....
.....

5) Do you believe that the way development policies are presently designed represents the best method? If not, please suggest alternatives.
.....
.....
.....

6) Do you think that a dynamic and innovative official has enough scope within the Government Administration to initiate and implement development programmes? If yes, why? If not, why not?
.....
.....
.....

7) In your opinion, what roles should:
a) politicians
b) administrators, and
c) villagers
play in the design and implementation of rural development programmes? If you find present arrangements unsatisfactory, please outline improvements:
.....
.....
.....

8) Do you think politicians should have more or less influence over development programmes than they presently have?
.....
.....
.....

9) Can you identify one Development Project with which you were associated which, in your opinion, was successful? What factors made for its success?

.....
.....
.....

10) Can you identify one Development Project with which you were associated which, in your opinion, was a failure? How do you now think it could have been made into a success?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 3

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Sub: Changes in the process of planning and distribution of plan outlays among the districts on the basis of an objective criterion.

PREAMBLE:

The idea of decentralised planning has been with us ever since the planning process started in our country, and has been recognised as an indispensable tool for bringing about the involvement of the people for better planning and implementation. In Karnataka, although the importance of District Planning has been accepted, district planning staff has been sanctioned for every district and draft integrated development plans of a perspective nature have been prepared for all districts (with a strengthening of the date-base at the district level), District Planning is not being done in a systematic way so as to bring about a proper integration of the district plans in the State Plan. The planning exercise at present consists of the communication of sectoral financial allocations to Heads of Departments at the State level, who in turn (and sometimes in a leisurely manner) communicate the district allocations to the District Heads of Departments without a critical appreciation or assessment of relative needs. The District Heads of Departments, in turn, prepare schemes in departmental isolation, ignoring the interdependence among sectors. The perspective district plans are rarely used in deciding the choice of programmes and priorities. Thus, District Planning has been little more than an arithmetical exercise, a summation of district departmental schemes. At the State Level, the planning exercise continues to be concentrated on the clearance of schemes by the Planning and Finance Departments. Changes from the present position are desirable if we are to integrate sectoral planning with spatial planning, taking note of the variations, the resource endowments and the needs of different areas.

It is, therefore, necessary to delineate the District Sector schemes and the State Sector schemes

broadly on the principle of whether an individual scheme or sphere of development is demonstrably of benefit to a particular district and would promote the socio-economic interest of the people belonging to the district, or not. This helps introduction and implementation of a two-tier planning structure in the State.

It is also necessary to distribute an appropriate proportion of the total plan outlays among the districts well in advance, on the basis of objective criteria, to enable the preparation of the Plan Programmes at the district level, keeping in view the resources and the requirements of the different taluks and the district as a whole.

ORDER NO. PD 3 PFP 77 BANGALORE, DATED THE
27TH DECEMBER 1977

(as partially amended by ORDER NO. PD 3 PFP 77, DATED
23rd JANUARY 1978)

After careful consideration of the many relevant factors pertaining to decentralised planning, Government are pleased to order the following:

A two-tier planning structure shall be created beginning with the Annual Plan 1978-79, demarcating the District Sector Schemes from the State Sector Schemes in the following manner:

District Sector Schemes

Agricultural Production

Soil Conservation Forests

Fisheries

Animal Husbandry Marketing

Minor Irrigation

Small Scale and Rural
Industries

Ayacut Development under
Minor Irrigation Projects

Primary and Secondary
Education

Health

State Sector Schemes

Generation and
Distribution of power

Major and Medium
Irrigation Projects

Major and Medium
Industries Investment
in Corporate Bodies

University Education
Professional and Technical
Education

Research and Training
State and National
Highways

Ayacut Development under
Major and Medium Projects
Ports and Inland Waterways

Water Supply and Sanitation
 Urban Development
 Welfare of Backward Classes
 Social Welfare
 District and Village Roads

Indivisible outlays and any other scheme that does not figure in the above classification will be treated as a State Sector Scheme.

For implementing the two-tier planning structure in the State from within the total Annual Plan outlay, after deducting outlays on major and medium irrigation, power generation and distribution, large and medium industries and other indivisible items, 75 per cent of the remainder will be allocated among the districts on the basis of an objective criterion discussed below. The remaining 25 per cent will be kept as a cushion to be allocated at the State level for making up any deficiencies in the distribution of the Plan benefits in the different districts, or for accelerating certain priority programmes for which additional outlays over and above what has been allocated on the basis of the objective criterion may become necessary.

The objective criterion indicated below shall be followed in deciding inter-district allocations among the District Sector Outlay for the State. In view of the special urban problems faced by Bangalore City, and the need to ensure that Bangalore District (Rural) is not put to disadvantage, one-twentieth of the outlay in the District Sector will be allocated to Bangalore City, treating it as a separate district. For the 19 Districts of the State (excluding Bangalore City), for determining each district's share of outlay, the following criteria will be used, the indicators and their weightage being as shown below:

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Weight</u>
1. Population	50%
2. Agricultural backwardness as measured by the value of agricultural output per hectare	5%
3. Backwardness in irrigation as measured by the proportion of irrigated area to net area sown	5%
4. Backwardness as measured by the value of industrial output	5%

5.	Backwardness in communication as measured by road and railway mileage for 100 sw. km. and per lakh of population	2 1/2%
6.	Backwardness in financial infrastructure as measured by size of population served by each commercial and co-operative bank	2 1/2%
7.	Backwardness in medical and health facilities as measured by the number of hospitals per 1,000 population/bed-population ratio	5%
8.	Backwardness in power supply:	
a)	As measured by the proportion of villages electrified	2 1/2%)
b)	As measured by per capita consumption of power	5% 2 1/2%)
9.	Problems of weaker section:	
a)	As measured by the proportion of SCS/STs in population	2 1/2%)
b)	As measured by the proportion of landless agricultural labour	5% 2 1/2%)
10.	Local Tax effort	5%
11.	Special Problems of Malnad Areas and drought prone areas:	
a)	As measured by the area under Forest	2 1/2%)
b)	As measured by the rural population of drought prone areas	5% 2 1/2%)
12.	Incidence of unemployment as measured by the proportion of registrants at the Employment Exchange (with appropriate adjustment wherever necessary)	5%

In order that District Sector Schemes are speedily and adequately planned, it is necessary that a procedure of giving quick sanctions to schemes be formulated. After the Government has communicated the total outlay under the District Sector to each District, the District Planning Committee (which will act in the nature of a technical unit) will hold discussions with each district departmental head to decide on each department's share of the outlay. Broad guidelines for such inter-sectoral

allocation within the District Sector will be communicated to each district by the Government, though departures from such allocations will be permitted if suggested by the District Committee and found to be satisfactory at the Government level. After the District Planning Committee has drafted the District Annual Plan, such a draft plan will then be discussed at the District Development Council. The decision of the District Development Council will then be sent to the Planning Department for approval and copies of each department's proposal in the District Sector will simultaneously be forwarded to concerned Heads of Departments. After approval (with or without any modifications), the proposals so approved will constitute the District Sector Annual Plan of that district.

Any expenditure on this account will be met out of the budget head "296 Secretariat Economic Services-A-Central Sector Scheme of State Planning Board and District Planning Committees".

This order issues with the concurrence of the Finance Department vide their U.O. Note No. FC/6874/77 dated 26th December, 1977.

By Order and in the name of the
Governor of Karnataka,
sd/-
(P.J. NAYAK)
Deputy Secretary to Government,
Planning Department

'COPY'

APPENDIX 4

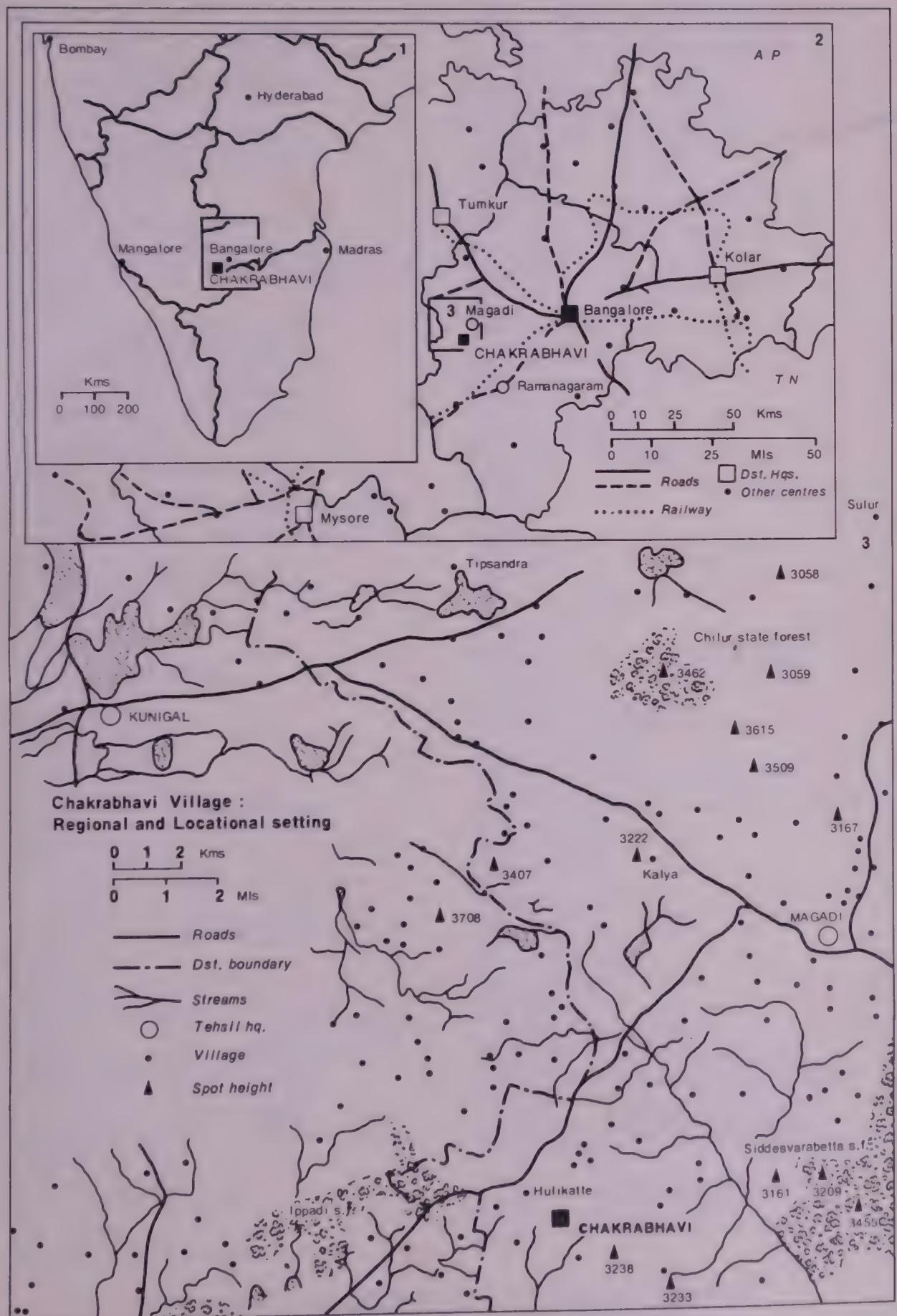
Table of Conversion of Indian Numerals

One lakh = 1,000,000

One crore = 10,000,000

Map A

MAPS SHOWING THE SETTING OF CHAKRABHAVI VILLAGE (3)
IN MAGADI TALUK, (2) PART OF KARNATAKA STATE, (1) SOUTH INDIA



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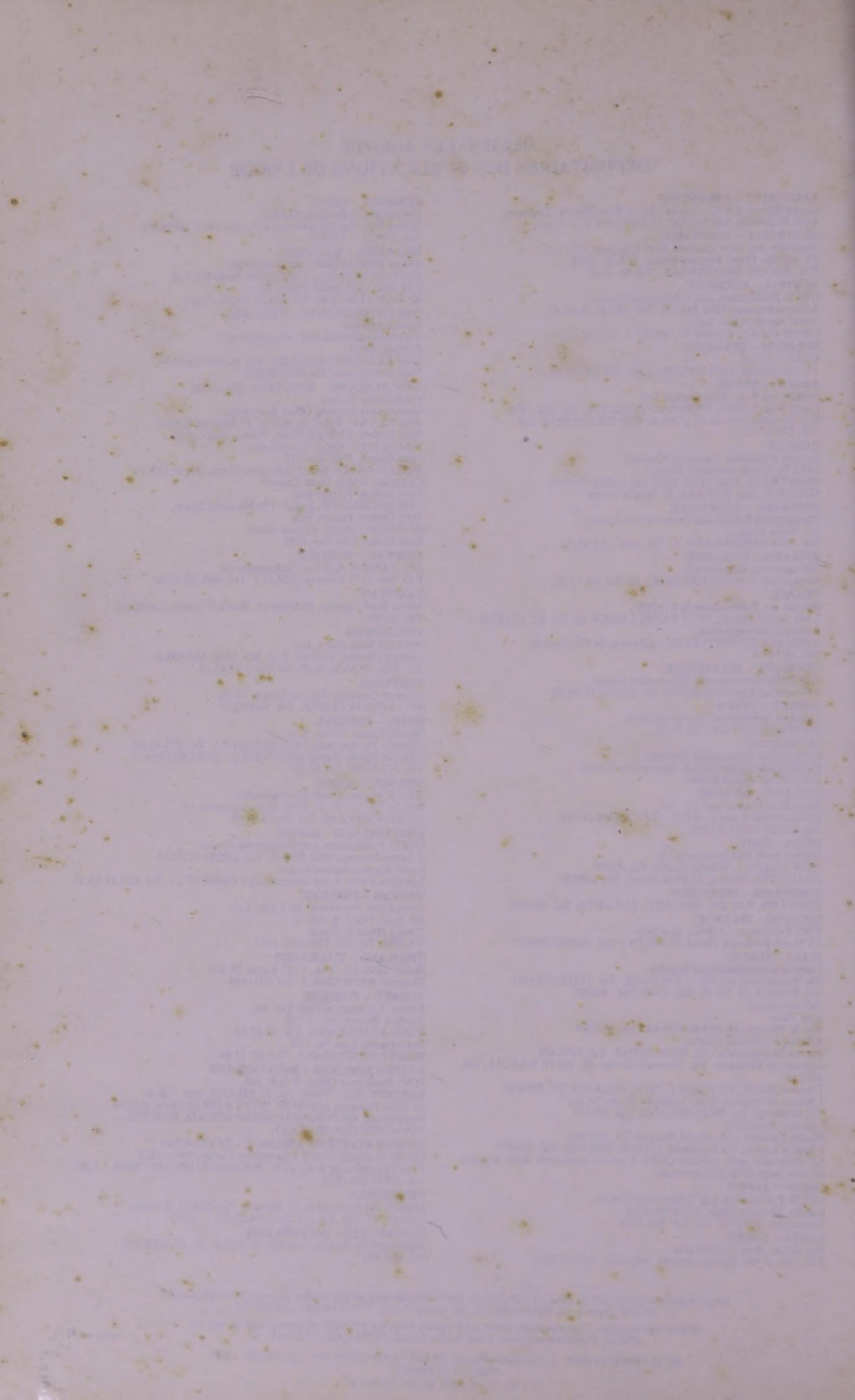
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This study examines, in the context of the South Indian State of Karnataka, how political decisions concerning basic needs strategies are conceived and implemented at government level, and how, at the other end of society, development affects a sample of poor villagers struggling to survive.